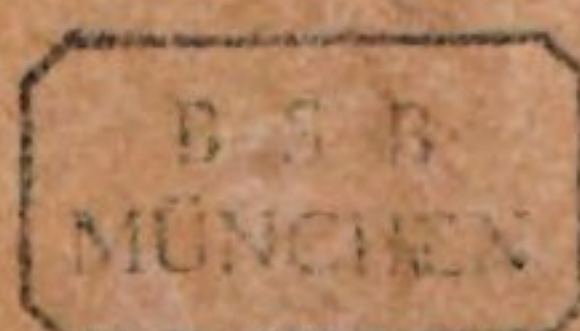

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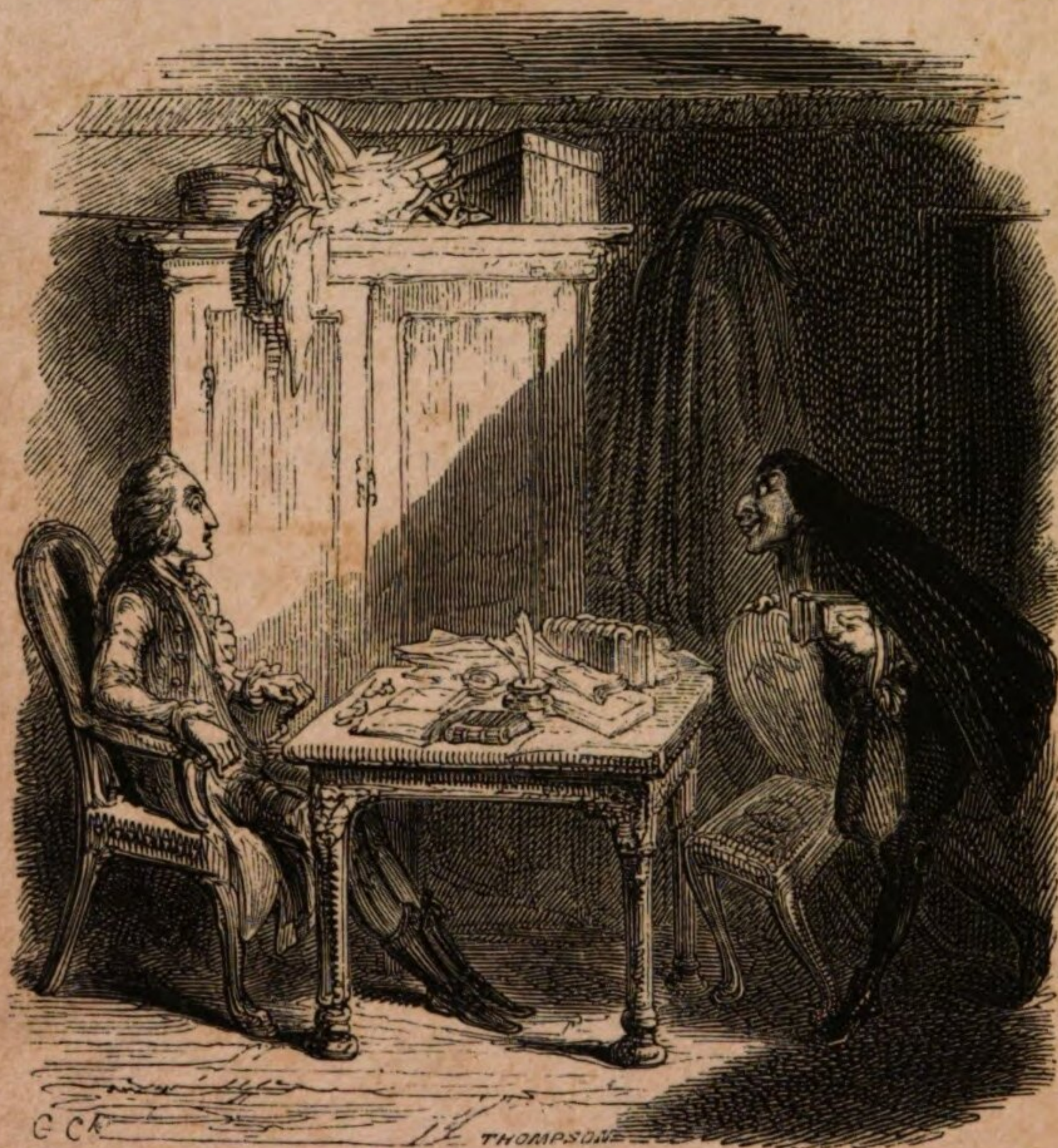
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THE
GENTLEMAN IN BLACK.

With Illustrations,
BY GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

ENGRAVED BY J. THOMPSON AND C. LANDELLS.

"Talia voce refert."



LONDON :
WILLIAM KIDD, 6, OLD BOND STREET.

MCCCXXI.



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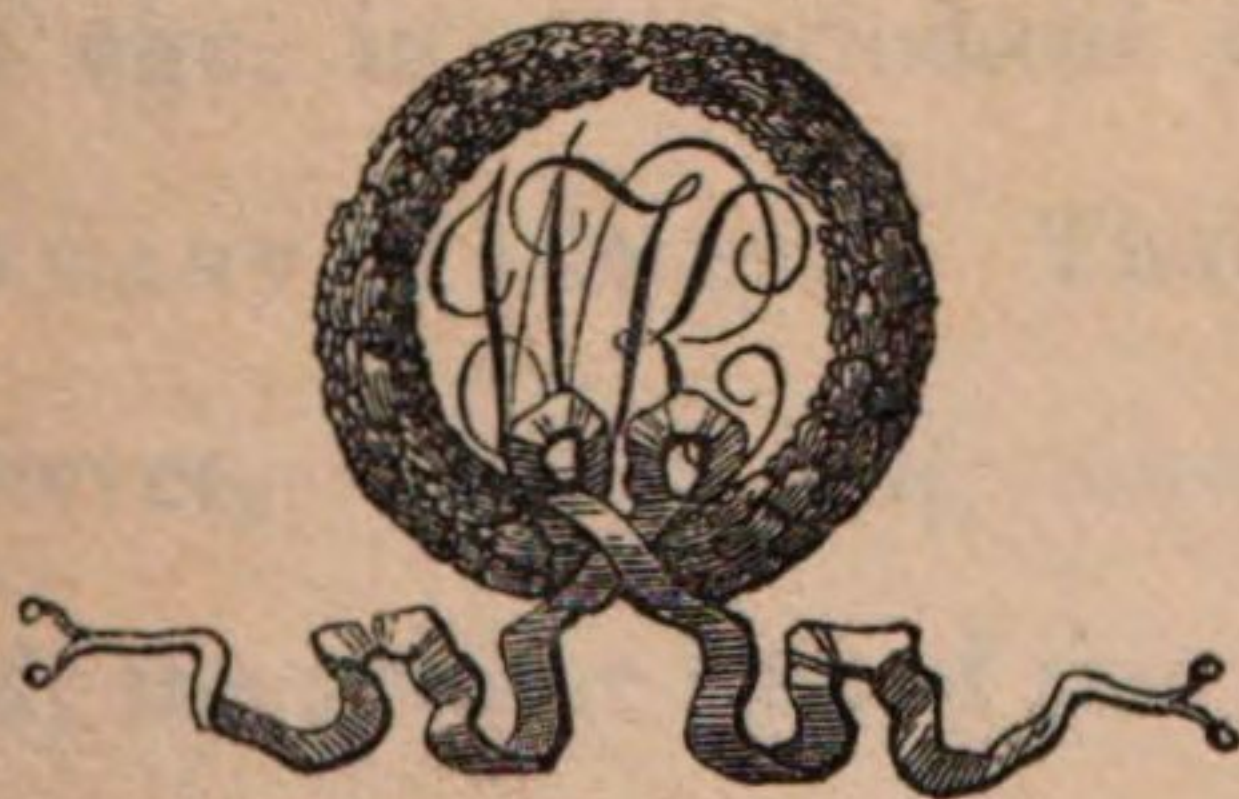
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GEORGE MEYER IN BLACK

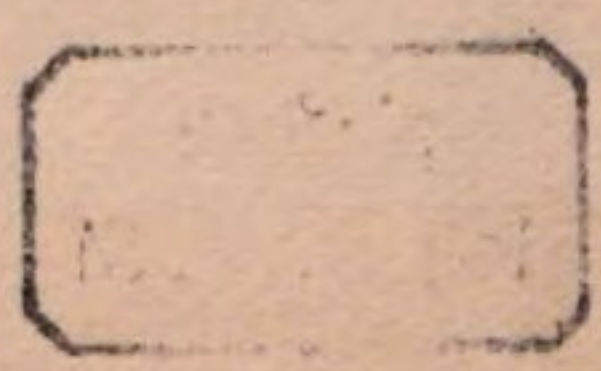
Illustrations

BY GEORGE MEYER

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ADVERTISEMENT.

It will, doubtless, be in the recollection of many of the readers of "The Gentleman in Black," that a *portion* of the work appeared some years ago, in a periodical entitled "THE LITERARY MAGNET." That publication, however, having long since been discontinued, the greater part of this volume has never yet appeared in print. At the request of the Subscribers, who were anxious that the tale should be completed, it was the

author's intention to have had it *immediately* re-published in an entire form, but on applying for the remainder of the manuscript, he was informed that it was *mislaid*. He has, therefore, been under the necessity of entirely re-writing it, and now,—having received his latest corrections—aided by the powerful talent of Mr. George Cruikshank,—it is presented to the public.

Old Bond Street,

Nov. 25, 1830.

The Gentleman in Black.

CHAPTER I.

“WHAT the devil shall I do?” exclaimed Louis Desonges: “not a sous have I in the world besides that solitary five franc piece! and where the next is to come from I cannot divine. What the devil must I do?”

“Did you call, Monsieur!” asked a gentle voice, which seemed to proceed from the more dusky corner of the apartment, in which Louis was sitting in his old arm-chair, before a worm-eaten table covered with books and papers.

“ Who, in the name of fate, are you ? ” responded the unhappy youth, looking round in search of the individual from whom the inquiry had proceeded.

“ Precisely so,” replied a stout, short, middle-aged gentleman, of a somewhat saturnine complexion, as he advanced from—we can’t say exactly where—into the middle of the room. He was clad in black, according to the fashion of the day ; had a loose Geneva cloak, as an upper garment, of the same colour ; and carried a large bundle of black-edged papers, tied with black tape, under his arm. Without the smallest ceremony, he placed a chair opposite our hero, bowed, seated himself, smiled, laid his papers on the table, rubbed his hands, and appeared altogether prepared for business. Louis felt somewhat embarrassed, but returned the stranger’s bow with all due civility ; and, after a brief, awkward pause, ventured to inquire the

name of the gentleman whom he had the honour of addressing.

“It is of little moment,” replied his extraordinary visitor: “you are in difficulties, and it is in my power to assist you;” and so saying, he began, in due form, to untie, and “sort out” his papers upon the table. Poor Louis looked on in silence, and sighing, bethought himself that if he had been as constant in his attendance at lectures, and in the courts, as at the billiard-tables and gaming houses of the Palais Royal, he might have picked up law enough to have enabled him to involve a case, in which so many documents were necessary, in a yet deeper state of mystification. “As it is,” thought he, “the man will soon discover my ignorance—so, as I have not yet practised, I’ll be honest, and tell him the truth at once.”

“You need not trouble yourself to do that, Sir,” said the stranger.

“To do what, Sir?” interrogated Louis, “I did not say anything.”

“I know that, my dear Sir,” observed the gentleman in the cloak, still busying himself with his papers, “but it is just the same thing.”

“*What* is just the same thing? I don’t at all comprehend you!” exclaimed the youth.

“Precisely so,” continued the stranger, “there, they are all correct, I believe—so, my dear Sir, as you were saying”——

“Excuse me, Sir,” said Louis, “I was not saying anything.”

“Pardon me, my dear young friend,” quoth the gentleman with the black-edged papers, “you talked of telling me the truth at once.”

“Not I, Sir, I only *thought* of doing so.”

“Oh! that’s all the same with *us*.”

“Then you’re no lawyer, I’m sure,” replied the youth.

“Not I, my friend, but, really—I should be sorry to appear unpolite to a gentleman of your birth and talents; the fact, however, is, that my engagements are, just now, exceedingly numerous and pressing; therefore, allow me, just to explain. This paper”——

“Confound this head-ache,” *thought* poor Louis to himself, “If I had gone to bed last night, instead of watching over the rouge et noir table, and losing my”——

“Pshaw! pshaw! smell this bottle,” said the stranger, politely handing a small exquisitely cut black glass bottle, which he took out of a black ebony case.

The young gentleman did so, and felt, “powerfully refreshed;” his head instantly appeared clearer, and his whole frame exhilarated.

“Mon Dieu!” he exclaimed, “Monsieur, where did you buy that wonderful specific?”

“Hist!” ejaculated the stranger, “Don’t

swear, I entreat you. It is extremely disagreeable to me."

"Well, then, I will not," said Louis; "but—pray inform me! Poor little Louise! and Adele! and the Comtesse! They'd adore me, if I could but procure for them such a specific. Pray, Monsieur, I conjure you, in the name of"—

"Stop!" cried the other, starting from his chair, "not a word more! There, there, I make you a present of the bottle, case and all. I manufactured it myself for the use of particular friends only."

"I'll give you a thousand francs for the recipe," exclaimed Louis.

"Where will you find the money?" asked the stranger, coolly settling himself back in his chair, like a man who has found his 'vantage ground.

"Where, indeed!" groaned poor Louis. Then, having rested his head awhile upon his empty

palm, he bethought him that something might be made of the stranger's papers, and, therefore, addressed himself to business.

“ I should ask your pardon, Sir,” said he, “ for talking of perfumes ; I accept this bottle as a token of amity between us, and now if you please”——

“ Good !” observed the gentleman in black, “ that is what I wish. I am a plain man”——(some-what plain, I must confess, *thought* Louis)——“ well—that's nothing. I wish to act handsomely by you ; I have taken a great fancy to you, and you are over head-and-ears in debt—have a hopeless love affair—have neglected your studies—offended your uncle—shattered your constitution”——

“ Mon Dieu !” exclaimed the youth.

“ If you say that again, Sir,” said the gentleman in black, “ I shall take my departure. I told you before that I objected to swearing ”

“Diable, then!” cried Louis.

“That’s better,” quoth his companion, smiling, and taking a pinch of blackguard, (which an Irish gentleman, in a passion, had given him), out of a black tortoise-shell box, handed it politely to our hero.

“No, Sir,” said the latter, sternly, “you and your snuff may go to h— together.”

“Precisely so,” calmly observed the stranger, returning the box to his pocket, but not offering to move from his chair.

“This is a little too much,” cried the enraged young Frenchman, starting upon his legs, “tell me, Sir, what you mean by intruding upon my privacy, and insulting me with the repetition of all my misfortunes? Who, and what the devil are you?”

“Precisely so, as I told you before,” replied the unruffled stranger.

“Precisely what? I don’t understand you!”

You may be the devil himself, for aught I know."

"Precisely so," was the reply.

"You don't mean to say you really are the"—

"Precisely so. *We* have an objection to plain yes and no."

"Then you *are* a lawyer after all."

"Not I, though I confess I have practised occasionally :—but, pshaw! this is a waste of time. I know your troubles and difficulties; and would help you through them, if you will allow me. I have money to any amount at my disposal and immediate command, as you may satisfy yourself;" and he threw a large black morocco leather pocket book upon the table, where it instantly burst open from the extension of (to poor Louis's eyes) an innumerable quantity of *billets de banque*, for 500 francs each. "And as for gold,"—and he began to draw from his

breeches' pocket a black satin purse, to which Louis thought there would be no end, so singularly did it appear to elongate itself, as the stranger continued to tug it from its dark abode, till it had attained the full extent of a Flemish ell. Yet, in his hands, it appeared light as the eider-down, till having placed it carefully on the table, the weight of the gold within rent asunder its silken prison, and a large quantity of louis d'ors rolled out upon the table.

Louis looked first at the immense wealth before him, then at his visitor ; again at the gold and notes ; and so on, alternately, about half a dozen times, ere he found himself capable of uttering even an exclamation of surprise. And each time his eyes rested upon the stranger's countenance, he discerned some new charm of feature and expression ; and he at length decided that he had never before seen so perfectly elegant, agreeable, interesting, well-bred, and accomplished a gentle-

man ; and wondered how he could for an instant have considered him a *plain* man.

“ It’s always the way,” observed the gentleman in black, “strangers think me anything but handsome : yet, as we get more intimate, my society becomes more and more agreeable, so that at last my friends are ever endeavouring to imitate me in all their actions and pursuits : but you’ll know more about that bye and bye.”

Poor Louis had by this time made up his mind that his visitor was no other than his Infernal Majesty, and would instantly have made application to his patron saint, and as many more as he could recollect the titles of, without looking into his calendar, upon the subject, had it not been for the dazzling gold, which he somehow instinctively apprehended would vanish from his sight at the sound of their names. If he had said his pater noster that morning, what now lay

before him was not, most assuredly, the sort of temptation from which he would have dreamed of imploring deliverance. The dark, middle-aged gentleman saw the gold "enter into his soul," and let it work its way in silence for a short time, watching his victim's countenance, and ever and anon looking disconcerted, as the youth's guardian angel seemed to be whispering in his ear.

"Well, Monsieur le Baron!" ejaculated he at length, "perhaps the *trifle* you see on the table may be of some little service to you?"

"I am no Baron," observed Louis.

"So much the worse."

"I know that well enough," rejoined Louis, testily, and heaved a sigh as he thought of the fair Emilie, and her most perpendicular father, the Comte de Tien a la Cour.

"It's your own fault," continued the gentleman in black, bustling up to the table, and opening a

paper ; “ you have but to sign this document, and what you see on the table is but a trifle when compared with the riches you may command ; besides uninterrupted health, and, indeed, whatever you wish for ; since money you know, my dear friend, carries all before it.”

“ And pray, Sir,” asked Louis, influenced, as he afterwards declared, *merely* by curiosity, but determined not to sign the paper upon *any* terms, “ what may be the contents of that document ? ”

“ A mere bagatelle ; look it over yourself. Only to sin for a *single* second this year, two seconds the next ; to double it the third, and so on with each succeeding year. I say the penalty amounts, in fact, to nothing ; for the truth is, you will sin for a much longer period annually if you do not sign it, to say nothing of the crimes which poverty and desperation may drive you to commit.” So saying, he threw the paper care-

lessly towards poor Louis, and betook himself to his blackguard, with due gentlemanly nonchalance.

The youth read—"Sin for a second in the first year, two seconds the second," then looked at the gold. "Let me see," said he, calculating, "that will be four seconds the third year—eight seconds the fourth—sixteen seconds the fifth—thirty-two seconds the sixth, and"—

"Exactly so," said the gentleman in black, interrupting him, "that is about a minute in the course of the whole six years. And, beside, you'll observe a clause, by which all the sins you have committed before, and all that you may in future commit, over and above the stipulated agreement, will be taken into account. So that you see not even a hermit need live more immaculately."

"I must confess you are very liberal," observed young Desonges, doubtingly.

“You’ll always find me liberal,” said the other, handing a pen across the table.

“Stop! stop! Let me read the whole paper first.”

“Oh, by all means! You’ll find all correctly expressed.”

Louis ascertained the manner in which he was to obtain daily supplies of money, so long as the stipulations in the contract were fulfilled;—“*any amount*” was specified—he had committed sins enough already, he well knew, to wipe off the score for many years to come, to say nothing of those which, in the common course of events, must of necessity ensue. The dream of unlimited riches, and unchecked and unbounded pleasure, was intoxicating; but yet a something he knew not how to define, prompted him to hesitate. At this critical juncture, a noise arose in the anti-room. There was a war of words, amid which was heard the voice of a *marchand tailleur*,

(from whose "*magasin*" poor Louis had been supplied with divers "habits, redingottes, gilets," &c., &c., for which payment had been oft and again demanded, and ever in vain,) loudly pre-eminant. Threat had succeeded threat, and matters were now approaching to a crisis.

"How much does the fellow want?" asked the gentleman in black.

"Three thousand livres," replied Louis.

"Pshaw! an insignificant trifle; call him in and pay him—merely to get rid of his impertinence.—There—throw your capote over the rest of the money—there are five thousand."

"Your generosity overpowers me," exclaimed the astonished Louis, taking up the pen, "There, Sir, I have signed the paper."

"Good! (reading) 'Louis Desonges,' perfectly correct; and there, my good friend, is the counterpart, signed by myself: it's a singular hand, perhaps you may not be able to decipher

it; indeed my signature is frequently, I have been told, taken for that of some of your great men. But no matter; if it answers their purpose I believe they don't care much for that, nor I either, to tell you the truth. However I must be off, having a little business just now to transact in London."

"Stop, my dear Sir," exclaimed Louis, whose fancy being now relieved from the terrors of a jail, was once more on the *qui vive*. "You promised me the recipe for that perfume. We must not forget the ladies. There's poor Adele suffers sadly from the head-ache;—and the lovely Comtesse—and"—

"Ah—I know what you would say," replied the gentleman in black, interrupting him, and taking a black-edged paper from the bundle, which he had again tied up with black tape; "they are almost all fond of such things.—There—you will find what they will think inesti-

mable recipes for perfumes, patches, rouge, distilled waters, and all that sort of thing. I am the original inventor of them all."

"The devil you are!" exclaimed Louis.

"Precisely so. And let me tell you I've derived no little advantage therefrom. Not that I began to introduce them with that intent; for, to say the truth, I had not then become so well acquainted with the follies and infatuation of mankind: but, the fact is, I hate to see a lovely woman in her own undisguised charms and beauty. She always reminds me of angels whose existence I am anxious to forget. Some among you, who have not yet adopted the use of my nostrums, still preserve the form of beings whom I once saw in the presence of one whom I dare not name."

This allusion recalled poor Louis to his senses. He shuddered at the bare recollection of what he had done; and, clasping his hands together,

lifted up his eyes toward heaven, and fervently ejaculated, "Oh ! Mon Dieu !"

When he turned to look for his sable companion, he was gone. If he had been allowed time for reflection, his thoughts would have been most painful ; but a violent knocking at the door helped to awaken him from his dream. The door burst open, and in stalked the identical tailor, whose *entrée* had been announced with so much clamour. Louis had, almost unconsciously, pocketed the five thousand livres, and his capote concealing the rest of his riches, the scene appeared, to the tailor's eye, as denuded and poverty-stricken as usual. A young Frenchman (particularly if in Paris) flies from grave to gay, with more volatility than any other mortal ; and Louis, having no fear of the law now before his eyes, threw himself back in his chair, and, with an air of gay defiance, demanded the intruder's business.

“Look ye, Monsieur,” replied the man of “shreds and patches,” “my mind is made up; I have two officers in the next room. I know where you were last night, throwing away my money at rouge et noir, among a parcel of demi-soldes and pauvre diables.”

“Never mind, Snip,” said Louis, laughing; “good luck must come at last, if we do but persevere.”

“What! and you dare to insult me, too!” ejaculated the enraged tailor. “Come in, my friends, and do your duty. There is your prisoner.”

The officers advanced, like automata, mechanically bowing to our hero, ere they made him captive. The tailor at this moment took hold of the capote, and was in the act of lifting it up, and exclaiming how much it had cost him, when his attention was arrested by the sight of a small portion only of Louis’s wealth; but sufficient to

change entirely the character of his countenance and tone. He let the capote drop, and fell back against the wall, with looks of almost reverential awe and dismay, stammering a thousand apologies.

“If you’ve made out your bill, Sir,” said Louis, in a most dignified style, “write a receipt.” Then throwing a Louis to each of the officers, he continued,—“Pray, gentlemen, accept that trifle for the trouble this fool of a bourgeois has occasioned you. I wished only to make him wait a little while for his money, as a punishment for his impertinence, and the infamous manner in which he has frequently made my clothes, and kept me waiting till the last moment, when I was going to a party.” They bowed—looked at each other—bowed again;—and, bowing, retreated backward, as though from the presence of Majesty, till the door was safely gained. The tailor advanced, in the same lowly

attitude ; wrote the “ acquit,” as well as he was able ; made another humble apology ; received his money, and bowed himself backward, after his quondam associates.

Left to himself, Louis hummed a tune from the last new opera ; reflected that what was done could not be undone ; and concluded it was, therefore, not worth while to reflect at all. To keep all clear for next year, he resolved to go and commit his moment of sin immediately. Where he went, or what he did, has not been recorded, but it is most certain that there was no complaint of his not having duly fulfilled his contract for many years afterward.

About the same time that this adventure occurred to Louis Desonges, at Paris, there was a young gentleman in the city of London, whose father, dying, left behind him a considerable sum of ready money, beside a flourishing West India trade, by strict attention to which his fortune

had been amassed. Charles Maxwell was just of age. He had received a good education, in the first place, from his father, and afterwards a very handsome allowance, by which he was enabled to keep what is called good society, whilst the old gentleman stuck close to the counting-house and the Exchange, and kept "all right."

But when he died, his son, taking a wider range, neglected the business, and left the whole of his mercantile affairs to his clerks; and the consequence was, that in less than two years he was on the eve of figuring in the Gazette.

At this critical juncture, too, he had fallen in love; a contingency which, if it had occurred somewhat earlier, might possibly have made him more careful of his own concerns, and saved him from the temptation which awaited him. In sad and sober mood, he sat occupied in a manner to which he had been but little accustomed,

namely, in melancholy contemplation, in his own private counting-house, when the gentleman of whom we have already spoken, suddenly made his appearance, with his black coat, waistcoat, inexpressibles, and stockings, black cloak, black bag, black-edged papers, tied with black tape, black smelling-bottle, snuff-box and blackguard, in the same style as when he visited the poor law student at Paris, not forgetting the *needful* black pocket-book, and long elastic black silk purse. A similar scene took place to that which befel the young Frenchman, excepting that Charles Maxwell's decision was accelerated by the arrival of a lot of "returned acceptances," in lieu of one long tailor's bill. It were hard to say whether the English or the French gentleman was most elated by his sudden accumulation of wealth, and unexpected escape from disgrace.

One dreamed of horses, dogs, wines, houses,

&c., &c. ; the other, of operas, dancers, rouge et noir, titles, &c., &c. One resolved to forsake the counting-house ; the other resolved to forsake the law ; thereby clearly evincing that the heart of neither was engaged in the pursuit for which he had been destined,—a fact which perhaps it would have been better if their parents could have ascertained, ere they had

“ Bound them to that oar,
Which thousands, once lashed fast to, quit no more.”]

When the bargain was concluded between young Charles and his new ally, he politely asked him to stay and dine with him. “ Excuse the liberty I take,”—and he rang the bell, which was immediately answered by a footman. Dinner was ordered, and a wondering clerk dispatched to his no less wondering bankers, with the sum of one hundred thousand pounds, and a verbal message, that he had received their

note, and should not trouble them for the "discounts" mentioned yesterday. A dinner, tête-à-tête, passed off delightfully between the new acquaintances. The gentleman in black drank his wine freely, and bottle after bottle of the old supernaculum appeared and disappeared with marvellous celerity. Charles talked of what he would do, and where he would go; and how he would astonish the natives, and purchase an estate in the country, and buy himself into parliament; whereat the dark gentleman gave a singular proof of his satisfaction, which, had it not been that "wine worketh wonders," would probably have broken up their party.

"What is that moving and rustling about behind you, under your cloak?" exclaimed Charles, gazing stupidly, as a drunken man often does when staring at something going on before him which he cannot exactly understand.

“ Oh ! it's only my tail, which I'm wagging,” replied his guest, “ it's a way *we* have whenever we are *very* much pleased.”

“ Oho ! old gentleman !” observed Charles, “ then you enjoy yourself, eh ? you take my jokes, eh ? you're a bit of a wag, eh ? ”

“ Yes,” drily replied his companion, “ I wag my tail.”

“ It's monstrously droll,” added Charles, hiccupping ; “ but the fact is, my comical, old Mr. What-d'ye-call-em, we have many ways, almost as whimsical, among ourselves.”

“ If you object to my custom——?” said the gentleman of the black, rustling cloak, bowing politely—

“ Oh, by no means,” replied Charles, “ sport your opossum as you please ; only, none of your long t-a-l-e-s. Ha ! ha ! A devilish pleasant conceit ! is'nt, old boy ; come fill your glass. I always hated *long* stories ; don't you ? ”

“Why, not precisely so,” answered the other, filling his glass ; “for the fact is, that I invented them.”

About this time it was, that Charles’s speech began to announce that he was “overtaken ;” and he never could remember how or when he and his sable ally parted. Something there was floating in his recollection next morning about having been in the streets, and of a row ; and a sort of a mill ;—but the particulars he could not recal. The black smelling-bottle, in the black ebony case, instantly dispersed the unpleasant effects of his late debauch ; but it was not intended to enable him to reflect clearly on the past.

The next morning he paced his room, after breakfast, endeavouring to settle within his own mind, some plan of operation, by which he might reap the most perfect enjoyment from the golden harvest before him. From this

reverie he was aroused by the entrance of his late father's confidential clerk, with an arm-full and a bag-full of papers. Charles noticed the honest anxiety expressed in his countenance, and at once resolved to make him happy.

"Take a seat, Mr. Ledger," said he, "I wished to see you on business."

"Indeed, Sir," ejaculated the astonished clerk.

"Yes, indeed !" repeated Charles, seating himself at the table, "for I'm off to Melton in an hour."

"My dear Sir," said Mr. Ledger, imploringly, "let me intreat you. The supply you obtained yesterday was most providential. I am delighted that you have *yet* such friends left : but it must be repaid, and the concerns of the house are, I am sorry to say——"

"Confound the concerns of the house !" exclaimed Charles.

"What do I hear !" ejaculated Ledger ;

“ alas ! alas ! my dear Sir, they are already confounded. And yet, if we could but obtain assistance for a few months only, and you would leave off drawing such heavy bills on your private account—— ”

“ What, then,” asked Charles, “ do you really think such a beggarly concern worth carrying on.”

“ Beggarly, Sir ! ” said Ledger, rising from his seat, and all the blood in his body apparently rushing to his face ; “ Sir ! if any other person had dared—— ; but you are *his* son —— Oh ! that I should live to see the day ! My poor dear master ! no man named him but with respect.”

Here the poor fellow was utterly overpowered, and sinking, exhausted, on the chair, sobbed like a child. Charles caught the infection, and looked at his father’s humble friend, with feelings far different from those which the money now at his command was intended by the donor to pro-

duce. He certainly was not, at that moment, committing his stipulated quantum of sin.

“Mr. Ledger,” said he, at length, “I most earnestly entreat your pardon for having trifled with your feelings; but the fact is, I have made up my mind”——

“Oh, don’t say so, my dear Sir,” said the clerk, interrupting him, from dread of the termination of his sentence, “just look over these papers—and, if the loan you obtained so miraculously can be continued but for a few months and you will only—in moderation—Sir—pray don’t take my freedom amiss—we may still go on—and the profits are—have been—will be, I pledge my word—ample—more than sufficient for all that any gentleman could—that is, ought—don’t be offended, I entreat you, Sir.”

“Not I,” replied Charles, “I’m glad to hear you give so good an account of the concern, as you call it. For my own part, it is no concern

of *mine now*. If you think it worth your acceptance, take it and welcome. As for me, thank God—no—I don't exactly mean that—but the fact is, I can do very well without it."

Poor Ledger's eyes and mouth were wide open, though he doubted much if that could be the case with his ears: but the reader shall not be troubled with an attempt to describe his feelings. Suffice it to say, that he would not accept more than a small share of the profits, the remainder to be duly carried to the credit side of his young master's account in the "private ledger." As a matter of course, he was to manage the whole affair as he thought fit; and, as a matter of course with Charles Maxwell, he troubled him not with any more large drafts, nor asked for a farthing of the profits; all which surprised and perplexed Mr. Ledger, who endeavoured to account for the circumstance, by supposing that the young man had discovered

some stock which his late father had privately invested, or that some mining shares, which had been put by as worthless, had turned up trumps ; or that he had got a prize in the lottery, or—in short he could not exactly make it out. So he dipped his pen in the inkstand, and stuck to his desk ; consoling himself with the reflection, that he was preparing a haven in which his young master and benefactor might find shelter, whenever he should be driven in by the storm.

It has been already stated that Charles Maxwell was in love, and stated too upon his own authority. He said so, he thought so—and yet when riches poured in upon him as a flood, he went to Melton first—then came to London, and

Ran each extreme of folly through,

And lived with half the town,

yet never allowed his mind to dwell upon the charms of Clara Haultaught, the old Admiral's

daughter, with whom he had danced and fallen in love, all in the regular way, at a Leicester "county" ball. The fact is, he had no time, for men of pleasure never have, "provided always," as the lawyers have it, that they are provided always with money and health. When either of these fall short, your mere men of pleasure are sad twaddlers, and have time enough to weary themselves and their friends by all manner of wearisome ways, and ill-supported pretensions. Which position should any reader doubt, let him go to Bath and learn wisdom.

To travel abroad gives a man an air, say some folks, and Charles Maxwell went off, therefore, to breathe and bring home some foreign air. Here it may be as well to observe, by way of avoiding difficulties hereafter, that the time of which we write was some year or two before *the* Revolution, so called, as the French say, "par excellence," because it was

the vilest, the most sanguinary, and the most fearful and extensive in its consequences, of any on the records of either ancient or modern history. The reader need scarcely be told it is the French revolution of 1790 to which we allude.

Charles, of course, went first to Paris, and there, almost of course, became acquainted with Louis Desonges; for it was barely possible that two young men, possessing the unlimited command of money, however different might be their habits, should not come into contact when pursuing some of the innumerable follies and pleasures of that most foolish and pleasurable metropolis.

When an Englishman is in Paris, whatever may be his natural taste or propensity, he must see every thing; and, with this laudable spirit of inquiry, Charles Maxwell betook himself to a notorious gambling-house, though he had not

the smallest taste for such amusements. Louis Desonges happened to be there at the time, and was interesting himself as much in the game as a man could possibly do to whom it was perfectly immaterial whether he lost or won. The air of gaiety and nonchalance with which he paid several heavy losses attracted the Englishman's attention, and after a few minutes they betted together, won, lost, paid and received immense sums, with such utter carelessness and good humour, as astonished each other, and made the bystanders imagine that their bets were fictitious, and made for some sinister, though (strange to say among Parisian adepts) undiscernible purpose. Under this impression all play was at a stand ; and Charles, after exchanging cards with his new friend, walked off with bills to the amount of about two million and a half of livres, that is, in English money, about a hundred thousand pounds, leaving his antagonist

without the smallest symptom of "*desespoir*," so common to all, but more particularly to French gamblers. The next morning Charles felt, that, notwithstanding the young Frenchman's gaiety and admirable presence of mind the preceding night, the loss of such a sum must be his utter ruin ; and, therefore, with the most philanthropic intention of restoring his winnings by making some foolish bet, he ordered his coachman to drive to the Rue de l'Université, where he found the young gambler at home, in his own most splendid hotel. The whole affair—lamps—silken curtains, sofas, and chairs—the silken silence of the servants—statues—paintings—books in the most splendid bindings ranged in battalia, while some half dozen were thrown carelessly on the floor, like the most exquisitely dressed among the brave after an engagement,—all—all—breathed of wealth. " Good Heavens !" exclaimed Charles, " and *I*, for the gratification

of a mere whim, for *I* have not the excuse of *other* men, have perhaps destroyed this young man's happiness for ever—his father's grey hairs—his poor portionless sisters—thrown, like young unfledged birds, from the genial warmth of their parent's downy nest, upon the sharp rocks of this world, while the bleak winds of adversity"—

The entrance of Louis Desonges here saved him the trouble of completing his picture. Not a vestige of nocturnal, involuntary vigilance, shaded his handsome and intelligent countenance. His eye sparkled with pleasure at the sight of his new acquaintance, but it was unclouded by the unsteady brow that rises and falls, and *will* tell, as if in spite of its owner, how the gamester's heart throbs, and warms, and grows cold. The fact was, Louis saw before him a rich young Englishman, a character with which he had long wished to be

acquainted ; but from their habitual reserve, (such, be it remembered, was *then* our national character), had ever been foiled in the attempt. He rushed across the room, and warmly shook Charles by the hand.

“He estimates my motive for coming,” thought the latter ; “’Tis well !”

“Have you breakfasted, so early ?” asked Louis, gaily.

“No, my good Sir,” was the reply ; the fact is, that my mind was somewhat uneasy about the affair of last night. You excuse my bluntness, I trust, but we English”——

“Are strange fellows ; I’ve always understood so. I want to see more of you ;—allons à déjeuner !—Ho ! Auguste ! Roderique !—Who waits there ?—Is breakfast ready ?”

Our heroes were ushered, by a petit-maitre out of livery, through a suite of rooms, adorned with an inattention to expence truly wonderful,

until they arrived at a saloon, opening into a garden, from whence the perfumed air, and the light of heaven, were scientifically allowed admittance through verandas, Venetian blinds, lace and muslin curtains, &c. &c. In brief, all was “*superbe et magnifique*.”

“Are you yet Frenchman enough to take our light wines at breakfast?” asked Louis, as soon as they were seated.

“When we are at Rome——” replied Charles.

“Precisely so,” said Louis, “It’s my way.”

“He has not lost his appetite,” thought Charles.

“You don’t eat, my dear Sir,” observed Louis;—“allow me——my cook is generally thought to excel.—Are these kidneys in Champagne, Pierre?”

“Oui, Monsieur!” replied a powdered lacquey, making a low obeisance. Louis recommended, and Charles ate; and Charles recommended,

and Louis drank : neither caring about their health, which was secured to them by their mutual friend ; and each possessing, unknown to the other, a wonderful black cut-glass bottle, in a black ebony case. Charles's motive was to make the young Frenchman drunk ; and then to return him his money, and make him believe he had won it : while Louis, having now caught a rich young Englishman in his own house, was determined to understand the real character of the nation to which he belonged ; and, imprimis, to ascertain how much one of them could eat and drink at a "*dejeuné à la fourchette*."

The champagne sparkled and disappeared, and Charles found courage to allude to the affair of the preceding evening. Louis smiled and said it was nothing.

"Pardon me, my dear Sir," observed Charles, drawing his chair closer ; "such a sum must be something to any body."

“Don’t mention it,” said Louis; “I shall never miss it; and am glad it has fallen into such hands as your’s.”

“I’ll bet you double the sum it’s more than you are now worth in the world,” said Charles bluntly, after swallowing a half-pint bumper.

“Done!” exclaimed Louis.

“Done!” replied Charles. The servants were ordered out of the room; and Louis, going to a secretaire, which stood in a recess, returned immediately, and threw more than the needful amount upon the table. Charles was astonished, and was about to pay, when a sudden thought struck him, and he hesitated.

“Never mind,” said Louis, “pay me when you like; or never: it is of no consequence.”

“On *honour*, let me ask,” said Charles, “is that pile of gold your own?”

“It is,” replied Louis, “I have made it a rule never to feel offended at any remarks

a loser may make. There's my hand, and my honour pledged. Few can bear to lose so well as I can. Indeed it would be strange if they could."

"Then it only remains for me to pay," observed Charles, calmly; and he took out his black morocco leather pocket-book for that purpose, while Louis replaced the money which he had taken from the secretaire, and brought from thence a certain specific for the dizziness which he found collecting in his head.

"I believe you'll find all right," said Charles.

"No doubt," replied the other, carelessly; but I'd rather you should have won, by Saint Louis!" he then thought within himself,—“I've heard much of English riches and prodigality, but this surpasses all I could have imagined;" and he applied the nostrum to his nose.

"What do I see?" cried Charles, feeling that his own lay safely at the bottom of his pocket. "Where did you get that bottle?"

“It was given me by a——a——friend ; I’ll bet you double that sum upon the table, that there is not it’s fellow in France.” “Done,” and “done,” said each ; and Charles produced his black bottle. They were examined, compared, and smelt to.

“I have lost,” said Louis ; “It’s very odd ;” and went again to the inexhaustible *escrutoire* for payment. Charles rolled the mass of papers together, and squeezed them into the black morocco pocket-book, aforesaid, which caught the eye of Louis, and caused him in his turn, to exclaim, “where did you get that black morocco book ?”

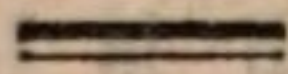
“Where I got this black elastic silk purse,” replied Charles ; beginning to haul out his riches, as sailors do a cable. The secret was out. The two unfortunate young men snuffed up the contents of their two black cut-glass bottles, in two black ebony cases, till their heads were cleared from the effects of the

wine ; and then sat themselves down to compare notes, and swear an everlasting friendship.

“Do you know what to do with that money on the table ?” asked Louis, as they were going out ; “you know *that* was no part of your compact, and, consequently, will not vanish at night, as that which is left out of what we demand during the day always does. That sum you won from me, and when it changes hands, you know——”

“A good idea !” exclaimed Charles, “It’s the only money I ever won at play, and I didn’t consider the difference. I see no reason why we should spare our dark acquaintance. Let me see ?—Oh ! I have it. Excuse me, I’ll only write a few lines, and send off the packet directly.” Accordingly he indited the first letter of business with which he had ever troubled Mr. Ledger, and enclosed therein nearly five hundred thousand pounds sterling.

CHAPTER II.



AT the moment when Charles had folded up the letter to Mr. Ledger, a servant in livery opened the door, and stood respectfully bowing, as though waiting his master's commands. "What the devil brings you here?" asked Louis.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said the man bending almost to the ground, "I thought you rang."

"Not I," replied Louis, "so take yourself off."

"Perhaps," observed the party-coloured gentleman, as he sidled obsequiously toward Charles, "Monsieur might have"—

"Oh, ah ! very true," Charles observed, care-

lessly, "with your leave, my dear Sir, I'll get your man to take this letter to the post."

The footman bowed, and was in the act of receiving the letter from Charles, when Louis suddenly started up, and knocked it out of his hand, exclaiming, "You abominable old rascal! Take up the letter, Maxwell, and put it into your pocket. And now, look at this long-tailed, periwigged, powdered fellow, and say if you have ever seen him before."

Charles instantly recognized his friend "autrefois," in black, and joined Louis in violent invectives against such sneaking, unhandsome, ungentleman-like conduct; whereat the aforesaid gentleman declared that he considered himself extremely ill-used by the appropriation of such a sum to the service of Mr. Ledger, a person with whom he had no sort of acquaintance or concern. The young friends were, however, too much elated at the idea of having outwitted the old

fellow, to give way an inch ; and he, unwilling to quarrel with two such promising youths, forbore to press the matter. They, therefore, sat down together in friendly chat, and he expressed a hope that their wishes had been complied with, and that all had gone on pleasantly and according to the strict letter of the compact. “ If not,” he continued, “ let me know, now I am here, and I will see to it—as my servants do not always act precisely as I could wish, during my absence.”

“ Then they are somewhat like ours,” said Louis ; “ there’s always something left undone about my place, though I keep so many that I don’t know the faces of half of them. It’s the greatest wonder in the world that I looked at yours.”

“ You cannot keep too many,” replied the middle-aged gentleman ; “ I like people to keep plenty of livery servants ; let them live well, have

high wages, and but little to do. That's the proper style, Sir, for me ; I——”

“ By the way,” said Louis, “ talking of livery servants—let me tell you that I do not think it is altogether decorous for you to be *sitting* here, talking to two gentlemen, in such a dress as you now wear.”

“ Precisely so,” replied the old gentleman, “ as you justly observe, it is hardly correct, and so——,” and, rising up, he stood awhile upon one leg, and began to move round thereon, in a sort of pirouette, first slowly, and then gradually increasing in velocity, until no part of the man was completely visible: then, the spinning as gradually subsided, till, by degrees, there appeared to the wondering friends, the identical black Geneva cloak, black bag, coat, waistcoat, &c., &c., which had formerly rivetted their attention: and forthwith their sable friend sprang over the back of a chair, and seated himself there-

in, with the most perfect and gentlemanly non-chalance.

“Bravo! bravo! well done, old boy!” exclaimed Louis. “I wish you’d give some of our opera dancers a lesson.”

“I have,” replied the gentleman in black.

“Good,” said Charles, “I believe you. But you must be fatigued after your exertion; won’t you take some refreshment.”

“With much pleasure,” answered he of the sables. “Come,” and he helped himself to a half-pint bumper of champagne, “let us take a friendly glass together. This buries all animosities. I couldn’t help feeling a little sore at the idea of a man of business—a plodding, humdrum sort of fellow, having that money—I like your idle, careless, negligent, or dashing sort of fellows best. But never mind, perhaps it may lead him to speculate. Allow me—you don’t help yourself—there—I like your English fashion of

drinking best. Come, Sir, the bottle stands with you."

"What in the world are you thinking about?" said Charles, "It is scarcely one o'clock! Nobody thinks of drinking at such an hour."

"What signifies what other people think?" replied the gentleman of the black bottle; "I am particularly partial to the custom of drinking early in the day. Nothing can be more ridiculous than the present fashion of fasting all day, and then dining at what used to be the cheerful supper hour. Pshaw! You take about half a dozen glasses of wine; and then, just at the instant you begin to enjoy yourself, coffee is announced, and you creep off to bed. Now, my dear Sir,—but come, fill your glasses, my dear fellows! Just, for once, oblige me. I am really excessively thirsty; and, on honour, M. Le Baron, considering that I am now your guest, and that *your* country fashions are not decidedly against the

custom ; and, moreover, as French politesse is proverbial among all the nations of the earth, I trust *you* will not object."

"Excellently urged," observed Charles Maxwell, who began somewhat to enjoy the whim of the thing ; "allons, my dear friend, allow the old fellow to indulge his odd humours for once. It can't be of much consequence. What need *we* to care for appearances and what other people think."

"Truly," replied Louis, "I know not why indeed,"

"Then, Sir," said the gentleman in black, who now assumed a generalship over a range of black bottles which he had summoned into the room, "we will begin our sitting. In the first place, I beg to observe that, as wine makes a man happy, the earlier he begins to drink after he rises, the more happiness falls to his lot, as he has then all the day before him, to be enjoyed in



high spirits and an utter emancipation from care, and that abominable nuisance called thought. So here goes! my dear boys. Excuse me—empty your glass—I'm a great stickler for forms in drinking. No day-light in the first instance, and no heel-taps in the second. That's my way. Hem! Perhaps I may have seemed somewhat prolix on this occasion: but, the fact is, I cannot endure to see a man pass the bottle. It is, in my opinion, the acme, or rather, perhaps, the bathos of low and ill breeding. If there be anything more ungentlemanlike, it is the conduct of a president who suffers anything of the sort, without inflicting bumper fines."

"Upon my word, Sir," said Charles, "You are become very arbitrary."

"Perhaps it may appear so," replied the gentleman in black, "at all events I have talked more than is my wont. But I hope never to see the day when it shall be considered rude to

press a gentleman to take his wine. Monsieur Desonges, the bottle stands with you, and you are wanted. What in the world are you thinking about?"

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen!" exclaimed Louis, "I was up late last night, and really——"

"Pshaw!" said the gentleman in black, "You are half asleep—here—take a pinch of my genuine—it will rouse you," then, handing his blackguard to the Frenchman, he whispered in Charles's ear, "These Monsieurs are poor creatures when compared with you English. And then their wines—What are they? The flavour is very well, to be sure: but, by all that's dusky! one might drink a hogshead for any effect it would have on such heads as your's and mine. No, my dear Sir, there's nothing like your English port, black and strong—Eh?"

"I don't like that snuff," said Louis, returning the box, "blackguard does not exactly suit me."

“Then try this,” quoth he of the black Geneva cloak, taking from his pocket a curiously carved “sneezer,” made from Vesuvian lava. “It is a mixture which I have lately introduced, and which appears likely to become a favourite among your rising men, though the old courtiers think it somewhat too strong.”

Louis, after a violent fit of sneezing, exclaimed, “strong indeed !”

“It seems well calculated,” observed Charles, “to prevent a man from going to sleep.”

“Precisely so,” replied the gentleman in black, “It is a mixture of Paris black rappee and hellebore, and just now in great request among the deputies here.”

The trio now “set in” for a regular drinking bout, in which it is almost unnecessary to say the gentleman in black was too much for the two young men. As usual on such occasions, they came to high words, and Charles flatly

accused the president of a breach of promise.

“It is of no use to contradict me,” said he, “I remember your words as plainly as possible—as though it were but yesterday. We were taking our wine after dinner, when you dined with me in the City, and you appeared highly pleased with the flavour of a bin which I called my *supernaculum*: and you promised, I’ll take my oath of it!”

“I beg you will do nothing of the sort,” ejaculated the gentleman in black, “I particularly object to such customs—besides, among gentlemen, they cannot be necessary. And, now I think of it, I seem to have some faint recollection—but, you know, we took a great deal of wine that day, and, perhaps——but, I beg your pardon, the bottle stands with you.”

“I see your drift,” said Charles, filling his glass boldly, “but allow me to tell you, old

boy, that, if we were to sit here from this time till to-morrow, I'll not be driven from the point. You did, then and there, faithfully promise me, that one bin in my cellar should always be filled with that identical sort of wine."

"Sir," replied the gentleman in black, "I now perfectly recollect the circumstance, and feel perfectly astonished at your having any cause of complaint, as I gave the necessary orders to a London wine-merchant, with whom I have long been on terms of intimacy. Our transactions together have been numerous, and generally conducted in a manner perfectly satisfactory to both parties."

"My dear Sir," said Charles, "the wine was no more like my *old* supernaculum, than you are like my grandmother."

"Bah!" replied the gentleman in black, "Was your wine old?"

"Certainly it was," Charles answered, "very

old; I know not how old; and, yet, full of body and flavour.—You *must* remember it.”

“Then, Sir,” calmly observed the gentleman in black,” the case is completely altered, and you have no right to complain. The bin, it seems, has been filled according to agreement. But you, my dear Sir, as an Englishman and a wine drinker—the bottle stands with you—you must be perfectly aware that it is utterly out of even my power, to make new wine taste like old.”

Somewhat of the same sort was ungallantly said by the gentleman in black, respecting the knowledge of ladies’ minds and tastes, when defending himself against a charge made by Louis, concerning the non-fulfilment of some promises, made to him, of success in certain adventures of the heart. Our two heroes, indeed, could not fail to observe, that there was a peculiar acerbity and testiness about their elderly friend, whenever ladies were the topic of

conversation. They, therefore, purposely introduced the subject of matrimony, whereupon his saturnine complexion assumed a hue many degrees dingier than usual. He uttered a violent philippic against the married life in general, and then went into a lamentation concerning the extreme folly of certain of his own friends in particular, who, instead of enjoying themselves and the various pleasures which had previously been at their disposal, had foolishly become heads of families; “and now,” he continued, “they live in the most miserable hum-drum way you can conceive, canting about virtue, and domestic duties, and such nonsense. I assure you the circumstance gives me an infinite deal of uneasiness. I have represented the thing to your Chambers here, and have some hopes—but, I beg your pardon, the bottle stands with you—I have some hopes that the detestable rite will be abolished in this country. Nothing can be more

ridiculous and tyrannical than that, because two people happen to like each other at any particular period, they should, therefore, be compelled to spend all their lives together. It is really the height of absurdity."

"Let us talk of something else," said Charles, whose thoughts were wandering into Leicestershire.

"Pray, old Monsieur Vaubrien," hiccuped Louis, "were you ever in love?"

"Bah!" exclaimed the gentleman in black, "What does that signify! I was never married, I can tell you *that*. Hem! The bottle stands with you."

"And the question stands with you," observed Charles, "What objection can you possibly have to answering it? Do you think it probable that either my friend or I should attempt to rival you, or fall in love with any 'chere amie' of yours?"

"Nothing more likely," replied the dark gen-

tleman; and withal a sardonic grin and a certain twinkling about the eyes, gave a peculiar expression of vivacity to the speaker's countenance, as he continued, ever and anon helping himself to a pinch of blackguard, "Nothing is more probable. But, my dear fellows, don't imagine that I can possibly be jealous. I have not the smallest objection, I assure you—nay, on the contrary, it would afford me the greatest imaginable delight; if it were only to see what sort of figure you would make.—I jealous, indeed! Ha! ha! ha! I like the idea exceedingly! I jealous! Ha! ha! ha!" and the dingy old beau looked round him with a most superb expression of self-conceit.

"Why you abominable old hoary compound of vanity!" exclaimed Louis, "you don't mean to insinuate that any lady, to whom it is likely that either of us should pay our devoirs, can possibly have admitted you as a suitor!"

“ But indeed, I do,” replied the gentleman in black, firmly. “ Aye, and in this ‘ our good city of Paris ’ too : and let me tell you, that at this very moment, there are more than one or two to whom my society and conversation are more than commonly agreeable.”

“ Name them !” cried Charles.

“ Aye, name, name ! Let us come to the point !” ejaculated Louis.

“ With all my heart,” replied the black boaster, rapping his black rappee and hellebore, “ I have no nonsensical squeamish objections on that head. I hate a fellow that hesitates about introducing a lady’s name over a glass of wine among friends. Come ! Fill your glasses ! Here’s a bumper to the lovely, accomplished and adorable * * * * ”

“ You infernal old coxcomb !” exclaimed Louis.

“ Precisely so,” replied the gentleman in black.

“A lady of her rank and beauty!” cried Charles.

“Precisely so,” was again the reply. “And now,” continued the dark old reprobate, “as my presence is particularly necessary just now in the Palais Royal, and we have taken precisely wine enough, it may be as well to save time; and so ——”

“Here he stooped down and fumbled awhile in his black bag, which stood, as usual, between his knees.

“Ah—hem—yes—there they are,” and he threw a score cards upon the table, which were immediately seized by the two young men, who forthwith became excessively indignant at the appearance of certain names thereon. But all the reply they could obtain from the gentleman in black was, “Precisely so;” after repeating which some half dozen times, he politely took leave, kicked his black bag through the window, and jumped after it into the garden.

Now, as to the names of the ladies in question, we can scarcely venture to give an opinion, because the transaction occurred about the time of the Revolution, when divers, even of the fair sex, did enact certain parts which might lead one to suspect that they really had permitted the occasional visits of the gentleman in black. Otherwise we should say that the whole were grossly slandered, inasmuch as it hath come to our knowledge, that the aforesaid personage and his friends do not scruple to traduce and speak familiarly of ladies, of whom they know little or nothing.

Our own rule, and that which we should recommend to all our readers, is never to give the smallest degree of credit to the inuendoes of such fellows. We utterly disbelieve and despise all their assertions, in consequence of our conviction that the degraded being, who could be guilty of the meanness of boasting of a lady's favour, would not hesitate at invent-

ing lies. Assuredly such men have been too much in company with the gentleman in black ; and we would rather believe them capable of the most abominable falsehoods, than be induced, by their asseverations, to doubt even for a moment, the propriety of any lady's conduct.

We are sorry to say that our two heroes had not yet attained the same way of thinking. They read and re-read the cards which the dark old rake had left upon the table ; and the consequence was, that, for some months they remained in Paris, and sought for, and found but too easily, introductions to his particular friends, then residing in that city.

Their first exploits on the day in question were performed, under the influence of wine, at the Palais Royal, where they, apparently by accident, again encountered the gentleman in black, who politely invited them to attend the meeting of a political club, at which he was to

preside that evening : but he did not press them, being well aware how extremely improbable it was that men who were in pursuit of pleasure, and who had unbounded wealth at their command, would be induced to enter into any engagements likely to expose them to imprisonment and more fatal consequences. He left them, therefore, to their own desires, and was, by no means, displeased with the result. But it is no part of our intended plan to enter into a minute detail of scenes particularly agreeable to him : and, indeed, if we were disposed so to employ our pen, it would be a work of supererogation, seeing that they are already much too well known.

When our heroes left Louis's hotel in the Rue de L'Université, the room in which they had held their symposium with their sable acquaintance was immediately filled by divers well-dressed lacqueys, who expressed no small sur-

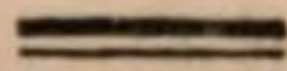
prise at the number of empty bottles which were scattered, in all directions, about the floor. They had not seen the third, and probably the greatest drinker of the party; and Louis's personal valet declared that his master could not possibly take more than one bottle. They, of course, came to a conclusion that the remaining three dozen and upward must have been consumed by the Englishman. All were struck with astonishment except an old gascon, who coolly took up a snuff-box (left, as if by accident, by the gentleman in black) and remarked, as he gave it the preparatory tap, "Oh! Three dozen is nothing for an Englishman! He will take about the same quantity again after dinner! and then begin drinking brandy and water." He might have said more, but was interrupted by a violent fit of sneezing, at the end of which he felt an irresistible propensity to see if there was any wine left upon the table. The Vesuvian

snuff-box was handed round, and produced precisely the same effects on all the party; and in less time than the circumstance takes in relating, they were seated round the table, with a determination of not being outdone by an Englishman. The result was precisely as the gentleman in black intended, when he thought proper to leave his black Paris rappee and hellebore. They settled the affairs of the nation most luxuriously among themselves that evening, and were all turned adrift next morning, by their master, in a very fit state to form members of the political club before mentioned, at which the gentleman of the black-edged papers frequently presided.

We have related this trivial occurrence, because it may, probably, in some degree, account for the general mistake into which the French formerly fell, relative to the immense capacity of our wine-bibbing countrymen. We have

little doubt that, in most cases, wherein enormous quantities appeared to have been consumed by one or two individuals, the gentleman in black was at their elbow, with his black rappee and hellebore, and probably some of his long tales and abominable misrepresentations of the fair sex.

CHAPTER III.



HAD it been our lot to have related the adventures of our heroes about the time of their occurrence, we should willingly have traced their progress, step by step, among the lions of Paris, and throughout their subsequent continental tour : but *now*, the Louvre, the Jura, the Alps, Venice, the Vatican, and all the long list of *et ceteras*, are “familiar in our ears as household words ;” and the reader would “skip” through the pages containing descriptions thereof, as rapidly as the modern traveller whirls past, in, or over the realities.

It was with some difficulty that Charles succeeded in persuading Louis to accompany him : for the Frenchman is not, like the Englishman, naturally, a travelling animal. Though he has too much politeness to make the affirmation, he is, generally, much of the same way of thinking as the old Greeks and Romans, who considered all nations but their own to be barbarians.

Louis's consent was faintly given to the plan of migration ; and some weeks had been spent in delay, after their route was arranged, when the two friends were sitting together one morning at Charley's Hotel, and a servant entered to announce a Mons. Bourreau, who immediately and without ceremony, entered the room.

There was a coarseness and abrupt familiarity about this person, which, added to his vulgar appearance, excessively annoyed the two young

men of pleasure. Charles politely inquired to what cause he might attribute the honour of such a visit.

“It is no honour,” replied Bourreau; and Charles bowed in acquiescence. “My visit,” continued the other “is, perhaps, correctly speaking, to Mons. Desonges.”

“To me!” exclaimed Louis, “what the devil can you want with me? some unpaid bill, I suppose; you should have applied to my cook, or butler, or coachman, or whoever ordered the things of you. I always give them money for such purposes at discretion.”

“Sir!” replied the advocate of liberty and equality, for such he was, notwithstanding his indignant feeling at being mistaken for a tradesman, “I beg you to understand, Sir, that I did not come here to be insulted.”

“Pshaw!” said Louis, testily, “your business?”

The advocate of liberty and equality here-

upon began a speech, which had evidently been composed for the occasion, and was much too prolix for repetition here. He spake of the heavy burdens borne by the people, the luxury and dissipation of the court and the aristocracy, of the unjust abuse of the rights of man, which were natural, physical and unalienable ; “ the law’s delay, the insolence of office,” and “ all the various ills that flesh is heir to ;” the whole of which he attributed to improper measures of government ; and, at length concluded with a piece of information, which effectually roused Louis from the ennui into which he was, in spite of his natural politesse, gradually sinking.

“ Your very extraordinary expenditure, Monsieur,” said Bourreau, “ has attracted notice. This, Sir, is the age of reason—the people see with the eyes of reason ; *we* judge and pronounce sentence on rational principles. Your

footsteps have been traced latterly. You invariably lose at the gambling houses; you are extravagant everywhere, and in debt nowhere; you have no landed estates, nor can we learn that you have any monies at interest. What remains then but to come to the conclusion that you are one of the pensioners, which, like locusts, are feeding upon the vitals of the public?"

"Capital!" exclaimed Charles Maxwell, "certainly! he is a sinecurist. Excellent! and me, Monsieur? what do you think of me? I conclude that, having been so much with my friend, I must likewise have subjected myself to your surveillance?"

"Excuse me, Monsieur Anglais," replied Bourreau, "*we* see only with the eye of reason; and your conduct, as well as that of many of your countrymen, cannot be accounted for upon any rational principles whatever."

During the last two minutes Louis had *thought* more, than at any one period since we had the pleasure of introducing him to the reader, when he was sitting, in his solitary, ill-furnished room, in bodily fear of a tailor. He now reflected on the immense sums which he had expended, and in how unworthy a manner; and something like repentance crossed his mind at the miserable and contemptible result. He had attracted the notice of such wretches as Bourreau and his associates! with such resources what might he not have achieved? His country; the royal family; the government; all—all were in difficulties, perhaps in a *perilous situation*! Thus thought Louis: and immediately there opened to his mind, a brilliant glimpse of what he might yet perform; and good resolutions for the future, poured in upon him in a manner which must have been exceedingly unpleasant to the gentleman in black;

for, on the instant, he opened the door and made his appearance with black cloak, coat, waistcoat, bag, &c., &c., as heretofore.

After bowing politely to our heroes, he addressed himself to the advocate of liberty and equality.

“Ah ! mon cher Bourreau ! This is an agreeable surprise ! by all that is fuliginous, I am delighted to meet you this morning ! Always upon the alert in the good cause ! eh ? stirring betimes, notwithstanding the fatigues of last night ! eh ? An exquisitely flaming speech that of yours ! a most glorious mystification ! “Thoughts that breathe and words that burn !” I could not have done the thing better myself. But, *entre nous*, it was excessively hot, so many people crowded together in that small room ; absolutely sulphureous—it was really almost too much for me. But, “ça ira !” we shall have little occasion to hide our heads much longer.”

“ Mais doucement ! Monsieur Le President ! ” exclaimed Bourreau, and he whispered that our heroes were not among the initiated.

“ Excuse me,” replied the gentleman in black, speaking out, “ these two gentlemen are my particular friends,”

“ Diâble ! ” exclaimed Bourreau.

“ Precisely so,” said his associate, tapping his snuff box, and regaling himself from its black-guard contents with peculiar zest.

“ Est it possible ! ” continued Bourreau, with unfeigned astonishment ; ” and yet you were one of the first to recommend ”——

“ That Monsieur’s hotel should be ransacked,” said the gentleman in black. “ Precisely so ; what have *we* to do with private friendships ? You know we have solemnly sworn that they shall not interfere with the public good ; and I, as president, am willing to convince you that I’ll not stick at trifles for the furtherance of our great

cause. Monsieur Desonges," he continued, addressing himself to Louis, "I have the pleasure to inform you that a few of my particular friends are now at your hotel."

"I am concerned to think that I was not at home to receive them," replied Louis.

"It is impossible that they can be there yet," said Bourreau, looking at his watch, "it wants a full hour to the preparatory meeting."

"Excuse me, my dear friend," observed the black president, "for differing from you in opinion; but, the fact is, that I accompanied them myself as far as the door. I seldom go farther on such occasions. When they have once crossed the threshold I can trust them to act for themselves."

Monsieur Bourreau instantly seized his hat, pleaded a most important engagement, which he had almost forgotten, and took leave, with the same abruptness with which he had made his entrée.

Immediately his back was turned, the gentleman in black coolly observed, "That fellow came with the intention of frightening you out of some money. However, he'll be in time for the scramble."

"What scramble?" inquired Louis.

"At your hotel," was the reply. "Those fellows, of whom I was speaking, are now hard at work, drinking, and breaking up your furniture most charmingly, and ransacking every corner, in hopes to find the proofs of your connection with the court. Bah! what makes you seem so much alarmed? The loss of a house can be of no consequence to you."

"The devil take the house," exclaimed Louis.

"Precisely so," observed the gentleman in black; "that would be quite correct."

"I must go there instantly," said the young Frenchman, "or those friends of yours will get possession of some—some documents, which I

would not, for the world,—Maxwell, my dear fellow! order out one of your carriages directly!”

“As you please,” quoth the dark elderly gentleman; “however, if you have not an absolute desire to figure away *à la lanterne*, I should recommend you to drive in a contrary direction.”

“Your advice may be very prudent,” replied Louis, “but as a man of honour, I cannot suffer those—certain letters, from individuals of the highest respectability, to fall into the hands of the canaille.”

“Pshaw!” observed the gentleman with the black bag, wherein he immediately began rummaging; “pshaw! phoo! bagatelles! billet-doux! mere circulars! I know what you mean. Hem! ha—” and he untied the black tape which bound a pretty considerable number of notes and letters together; “ah—there—just like these.” He then opened about half a score, and threw them across

the table. "I mean to give them all to a bookseller whom I have in my eye, and have them published ;—I'm sure they'll sell."

"Why this," cried Louis, "is one of the notes which I locked up this morning in my *escrutoire*, from the Comtesse——!"

"And you *must* have stolen this from my desk!" exclaimed Charles; "it is impossible that I should be mistaken in that beautiful handwriting. I'll take my oath"——

"Don't do that," said the dark antique lover, "look at the directions."

"What is this?" asked Charles, reading, "M. le Duc de ——, M. le Comte?" "M. le Marquis;" read Louis, "M. le Baron, Son Altesse; what does all this mean? Have you been housebreaking round Paris to collect all these, or are you really capable of personating so many different characters, and making women believe——?"

“Precisely so,” replied the gentleman in black, “I hold that stratagems are fair both in love and war. Indeed, with me, the two sciences are the same, since I always consider women, on whom I cannot make an impression, as the worst and most powerful of my enemies.”

“And those with whom you do succeed, seem, methinks, to be treated in a strange manner,” said Charles, indignantly. “I really know not in what terms to express my opinion of your conduct, it is so mean, paltry, cowardly, ungentlemanly, unfeeling, dishonourable, cruel——”

“Precisely so,” replied the gentleman in black, with perfect sang froid; “I do not deny it. But after all, I believe that, in similar cases, my plan is followed by the generality of mankind. As I said before, love is like war. Does a general, merely because he has taken a town, sit himself down and reside there? Bah! but you’ve already had my opinion of matrimony; and, as for any

other ties—bah ! they are preciously ridiculous !
Love, you know,

“ At sight of human ties,
Flutters his wings, and, in a moment, flies.”

It is a fact, upon my honour !” and here, as though well pleased with the manner in which he had acquitted himself, he had recourse to his Vesuvian repository of black Paris rappee and hellebore.

He was not, however, even by his favourite topic of speaking against the fair sex, to be diverted from the main purport of his visit, which was to drive the two young men from Paris. He was determined on this point, because he perceived, in Louis, a lurking disposition to apply the means, placed at his disposal, in a way which would be excessively unpleasant to his feelings. He therefore recited a few anecdotes and resolutions of the then embryo revolutionists, deputies, triumviri, directeurs, republicans, friends of liberty, &c. &c., which were well calculated to

shake stronger nerves than were possessed by either of his hearers. The estimation in which Louis had held his billet-doux was much diminished, by the discovery that they were not so unique as he had imagined ; and he, as usual in such cases, began to conceive himself excessively ill-used by the inditers. There was, however, a lingering inclination within him, a something which whispered him, not to leave Paris. He could not exactly account for it ; for he had not seen the fair Emilie, nor her most perpendicular father, the Comte de Tien a la Cour, for some months.

But the gentleman in black had a certain misgiving, relative to the exact state of his mind ; and, therefore, left him not until he had completely bewildered his brain in the mazes and mysteries of politics, and opened to his view a state of things amply sufficient to make any man, of a quiet and pleasure-loving disposition, desire to be “ upon the move ” from the scene of action.

We have been told that this was the only instance in which the gentleman in black was ever known to take an active part in persuading a young man of fashion and fortune to quit Paris.

To men provided with such black morocco pocket books, such long black elastic silk purses, such black snuff-boxes, and such black cut glass bottles in such black ebony cases, little preparation was necessary for a journey; therefore, our heroes made up their minds to dine quietly at home, at Charley's Hotel; then to take a farewell lounge round the Palais Royal, and to depart on the following morning.

In the meanwhile, the gentleman in black, ever upon the alert to carry his schemes into effect, had propagated a report among the aristocracy that Monsieur Desonges, whose house had been attacked by the mob that morning, had previously been handsomely remunerated. That he was, in fact, one of the secret abettors of the disaffected ;

that his house was purposely furnished in a most extravagant manner ; that his cellars were stocked with an immense quantity of the most expensive wines, and, in short, that the whole affair was “ got up ” for the purpose of inflaming the minds of the canaille by a taste of plunder, and leading them to imagine that the whole of the aristocracy were living in a state of similar luxury and extravagance, while they themselves were suffering under the pressure of poverty and want.

Some indeed have avowed that this report was not merely a feint, to answer the purposes of the hour ; but that the president in black, did really excite the populace to attack Louis’s hotel, with the intention of producing such an impression on their minds. Be that as it may, Louis had scarcely entered the café, which he was wont to patronize, than he was immediately the object of general attention. Expressions of condolence, upon the horrible transaction of the morning,

poured in, from various quarters ; and, it must be confessed that the light manner in which the owner of so splendid an hotel treated his loss, tended, not a little, to confirm the suspicion that he had been indemnified.

Little knots of politicians were, consequently, gathered together at all the tables : there was much whispering and shrugging of shoulders ; and the subject was discussed with occasional solemnity, and a vehemence certainly quite adequate to its importance.

In the meanwhile, the two friends moved on, nothing doubting,—looked in at the theatres—nodded to some half dozen friends, and displayed a perfect ease in their manners, which, under existing circumstances, appeared quite marvellous. It was noticed, however, that they did not enter certain privileged boxes, occupied by well known leaders of fashion and rank, with whom, particularly some of the ladies therein, they were under-

stood to be on good terms. This circumstance was afterwards spoken of as a proof of Louis's defection from the aristocrats, by one party ; and, by those on the other side of the question, it was cited as a flagrant instance of aristocratic pride and ingratitude, that, on the very day that a young man was deprived of the means of continuing a monstrous expenditure for their gratification, he was "cut" by the people about the court. The Englishman was, of course, looked upon with an eye of jealousy by politicians of all descriptions.

Though perfectly unconscious of the great sensation which they created, the two friends could not but perceive that, occasionally, an evil eye was upon them ; and they were about to go home, to prepare, by rest, for the fatigues of the morrow, when Louis was accosted by a friend of his former humbler fortunes, whom he had not seen for many months. On his lips was con-

dolence for the morning's disaster ; and there seemed, to Louis, a much deeper feeling in his tone than in any other of the numerous regrets which had met his ear.

“Poor fellow !” said he, whispering to Charles. “It is impossible to tell when we may meet again. I know he is badly off ; but I cannot offend him by offering him money ; so, I’ll just go and lose a few louis with him.” When a man has a desire to throw away a little money, he can generally effect the purpose without much difficulty ; and therefore the business was soon settled : but, unfortunately, the transaction took place in the Palais Royal, and was witnessed by divers persons, whose business it was, or who had made it their business, to watch Louis’s conduct ; and the style in which he played, and the glee with which he lost, were conclusive evidences of the report in circulation against him.

The room in which they sat was, by this time, much thinned of company—there were but one

or two stragglers, at odd corners. Charles threw a louis to the ancient "garcon," and the friends were about to depart, when an herculean member of the gen-d'armerie entered the room and formally arrested Louis Desonges in the name of the king.

"On what charge?" exclaimed the prisoner.

"That is no affair of mine," said the soldier, "I am only performing my duty."

"I'll be his bail," said the gentleman in black, whom nobody had seen before, but who now stepped forward as to the rescue.

"Monsieur is a state prisoner," observed the gen-d'arme, with a supercilious air.

"Never mind him," said the gentleman in black, to Louis: and he forthwith threw off his black Geneva cloak and black coat, and displayed, to the wondering optics of the party, a curiously worked black cambric shirt which he wore beneath. Then placing himself in an attitude, which would have done honour to a



"Anger, however, he calmly told the

gentleman,

"What are you, old boy?" asked the

gentleman, diverted at the drollery of

the man's appearance, and mistaking him

for a clown.

"No," replied the gentleman in

earnest,

"I will go home and look after your

business, the soldier.

"No," was the answer, "that is

not what I mean to do."

"What?" said the man in office to one

of the men who stood at the door, "take

care of that

man corporal," replied Guillaume,

solemnly and lowering his market

to sweep away the aforesaid black

man, as a fly may be brushed from the

table; but, to Guillaume's utter

e



first rate English bruiser, he calmly told the soldier to "come on."

"Who the devil are you, old boy?" asked the gen-d'arme, somewhat diverted at the drollery of his antagonist's appearance, and mistaking him for a drunken bourgeois.

"Precisely so," replied the gentleman in cambric.

"You had better go home and look after your family," added the soldier.

"Precisely so," was the answer, "that is precisely what I mean to do."

"Guillaume!" said the man in office to one of his comrades who stood at the door, "turn out this old drunkard."

"Oui, mon corporal," replied Guillaume, advancing solemnly and lowering his musket, as if to sweep away the aforesaid black-shirted gentleman, as a fly may be brushed from the table: but, to Guillaume's utter dismay, the

said dark gentleman gave the said musket a kick, which sent it up to the ceiling, where it hung suspended by the bayonet.

“Diâble!” exclaimed poor Guillaume.

“Precisely so,” repeated the gentleman of the black cambric, rubbing his hands, and then resuming his attitude of defence, “Why don’t you come on, you cowards?”

“Cowards!” exclaimed the corporal, “I’ll soon teach you, you old coquin!” and he rushed forward to the attack.

“One, two,” said the gentleman in black, as he planted two blows, well known among men of “science” by those names, and down fell the corporal. “One, two, again,” added the black bruiser, and poor Guillaume measured his length upon the floor. “I’m the boy for darkening their daylights,” cried the dingy elderly gentleman, in high glee.

“Au secours!” roared the two prostrate men

of war; and instantly a great noise of trampling was heard upon the staircase, immediately after which a dozen of gen-d'armerie made their appearance. The sight of "a mill," and the admirable science displayed by his dingy friend, recalled old times to Charles's remembrance, and he had, as if by instinct, thrown off his coat. Louis followed his example, though he knew not exactly for what purpose: but he was one of the million who think it right to imitate those around them.

The soldiers drew up like brave men prepared to encounter an enemy; but there was no enemy to fight. It was, to them, a scene most strange and unaccountable, for they could perceive nothing formidable in the appearance of two young men unarmed and without coats, and a short elderly gentleman, in a black shirt, whom they, for soldiers are woefully ignorant in such matters, mistook for a clergyman. Their

comrades had by this time got up, and were rubbing their eyes, which were, however, very effectually obscured. More soldiers were now heard on the ascent, for the alarm had gone round with true military rapidity.

“Milling won’t do now,” whispered the gentleman in black to Charles, “there are too many of them; leave all to me and tell Desonges to hold his tongue.”

An officer now stepped forward, and asked the two eye-rubbers what was the meaning of the uproar.

“It is that infernal old rascal in black,” replied the corporal.

“Precisely so,” said the gentleman of the cambric.

“That’s him!” cried Guillaume, “that’s him that kicked my musket up into the ceiling.” And immediately he recommenced rubbing and exclaiming “oh! my eyes!”

The officer looked up, and seeing the musket suspended by the bayonet from the roof, into which, it seems to have penetrated to some depth, turned to the gentleman in black for an explanation.

“Precisely so,” was the reply, I confess it. I was wrong: but I deliver myself up to answer for my improper conduct.”

“That’s not him!” roared the blind corporal.

“What do you mean?” asked the officer, “you said this moment it was him.”

“No, no, not the prisoner! the prisoner is him in the pompadour coat,” cried the corporal.

“They have none of them any coats,” said the officer.

“Sir,” resumed the gentleman in black muslin, with an ease and elegance of manner, which failed not in its effect upon the young military Parisian, and at the same time, imitating so closely the tone of Louis, as to startle the real

owner of the voice, "Sir, the poor corporal seems to have been labouring for some time under a defect of vision, and the crisis has come suddenly upon him. In the matter of the coat, however, I must say—"

"That's him!" shouted the corporal, "I'll swear to him."

"Let me beg, Mons. le capitaine," continued the gentleman in the black sleeves, "that you will not suffer any swearing in my presence! but, as I was observing, here is my coat," and he took it from a chair, and held it up toward the chandelier, "you may perceive it is a sort of a—pompadour—or a what d'ye call it de la reine—or—a something else from the Dauphin. Bah! I am no tailor, I don't understand such matters."

"By all that's courtly," said the officer, "it is a most exquisite cloth, and made in a style of infinite and inimitable workmanship. Will you

favour me with your artist's address? really, upon my honour! I never!—but, as to the colour—I really cannot say exactly that I know what term to give it; it is a kind of a sort of a—no—not exactly that—but, àpropos, I believe you are my prisoner, now I think of it?”

“Precisely so,” replied the gentleman usually in black; “it is not worth while to keep these men waiting. As for the charge against me—let it come—but gentlemen of your honourable profession must, I know, do their duty. We may as well, therefore, adjourn.”

“Apropos, corporal, you have the letter about you?” asked the officer. The poor fellow fumbled and found it, and respectfully presented it to his superior, who glanced over it, and then continued speaking. “Your name is——”

“Louis Desonges,” said the gentleman of the curiously cut coat.

“Let me see,” resumed the officer; and then

he read to himself a description of Louis's person and stature, which, although they accorded as little as might be, appeared perfectly correct in his eye, as indicating the very gentlemanly, though somewhat dark, personage before him.

When the scrutiny was over, the gentleman in the questionable pompadour coat took the officer's arm with the most perfect coolness, and remarked, "You'll find my tailor a devilish good fellow—never in a hurry for his money."

"Capital!" exclaimed the young officer, "my dear Sir, I'm greatly obliged—but—just turn round, now it's on—by St. Louis! it fits like a glove! What do you call long credit? But, I beg your pardon, I keep you waiting—it is my duty now to wait upon you."

"Pardon me, my dear Sir," said the gentleman of the black cambric and pompadour, "it is my duty to wait upon you—I intreat you indeed you give me pain—consider, I am your prisoner."

“ Well, then, I am your guardian,” was the reply ; “ ha ! ha ! well, and so he—serjeant ! set us a going, will you !—so he gives devilish long credit, does he ? ”

“ You may say that ! ” answered the gentleman of the black bag : and, with such sort of conversation, the military and the prisoner left our heroes, as though they were persons utterly beneath their attention.

“ It is, by no means, an unpleasant thing to be taken to the Bastile by proxy,” observed Louis.

“ He’s a capital old fellow ! ” said Charles, “ with his ‘ one, two ’—did you observe his guard ? ”

“ It was a blackguard style of doing the thing, after all,” added Louis ; “ I prefer the rapier : ” and then they, in their way home, entered upon a discussion relative to national habits and prejudices, respecting which they

argued long, and with the usual result, namely, that each became more firmly established in his own opinion.

In the morning an officer of the Bastile, who knew Louis's person well, and whose duty it was to wait upon him in his confinement, was much astonished to find his place occupied by the gentleman in black, who seemed in high glee, and gaily addressed his visitor, with whom it seemed he had formerly been intimate. The jailor, however, did not now feel at all disposed to acknowledge the acquaintance; and the dark gentleman was immediately brought forth from his dark cell, and confronted with the corporal and Guillaume, who had, by this time, recovered the use of their eyes. An *éclaircissement* consequently took place, and the young officer made ten thousand apologies for the error into which he had been led by the folly of his men.

The gentleman in black vehemently entreated

him not to give himself a moment's uneasiness; and assured him that he could not but deem the occurrence most fortunate, which had introduced him to a young officer of such bravery, such courtly manners, and such exquisite taste. A few compliments were then exchanged between the two new acquaintances, and (after the gentleman in black had given a handful of Louis to the corporal and Guillaume, to purchase ointment for their black eyes) they drove off together to the tailor's, where the hopeful young military exquisite "opened an account" in a manner extremely gratifying to his companion.

"The fellow gives long credit, you say?" observed the officer carelessly, as he buttoned his coat, and they were leaving the artist's "magasin."

"Devilish long," replied the other.

"Capital! I hate to be pestered for payment by these vulgar fellows. It's excessively annoying."

“Precisely so,” replied his dark acquaintance ;
“but set your heart at ease. I’ll mystify the fellow. I’ll tell him that your custom will make his fortune, for that nothing can prevent your rapid rise in the service, and that you must, in a very few years, be a general officer, *at least*. And, indeed, my dear friend, there is no impropriety in my making such a representation : for, really, with your appearance, your figure, manners, taste, and abilities”——

“Nay, nay, my dear Monsieur !” exclaimed the young Parisian, “you are too partial !”

“Not a whit,” said the insinuating flatterer. “I *could* tell you what a certain beautiful young Comtesse—but, mum—àpropos, have you breakfasted ?”

“Not yet,” was the reply.

“Allons donc, exclaimed the other, “à la fourchette, toujours, that’s my way ;” and they went into a restaurateur together.

From thence, after a couple of hours, the gentleman in black came forth alone, muttering to himself, "Hem! at billiards with a chevalier d'industrie—believes himself the handsomest fellow in Paris—fancies all the ladies in love with him—long tailor's bill—good—exquisitely dingy!" and, snuffing up a huge pinch of black Paris rappee and hellebore, he walked away.

In the meanwhile our two heroes were "en route," and had left Paris many leagues in the rear.

CHAPTER IV.

WE are now about to ask the reader to repeat an action which, in all probability, he will have committed several times, without any hint from us. We earnestly request him, after reading a few more lines, to throw aside our pages, and to employ himself awhile in fancying himself possessed of such a black morocco pocket book, long black elastic steel purse and et-ceteras, as appertained to each of our two heroes. Imagination, we opine, if its wings be allowed full play, will lead him a strange dance. Such a dance, indeed, if the truth were to be confessed, as would be scarcely seemly if taken

in reality. Should the eye of beauty be cast on this page, we beg it to be understood that the last sentence is not intended to apply to the fair.

We *now* suppose this task to be executed : and, if it be done fairly, and honestly, and without any mental reservation, the reader will not be surprised to hear that Charles Maxwell and Louis Desonges committed many egregious acts during their ramblings, for three years, upon the continent. The gentleman in black appears to have been perfectly satisfied with their proceedings : at all events he deemed his personal appearance before them unnecessary ; and, it is said, that, having much business in hand at that period in Paris, he established his headquarters in the Palais Royal, and was to be seen, every hour of the day and night, at some one of the various cafés therein, or in the neighbourhood. His society seems likewise to have been

much sought after ; and the dark old gentleman appeared in high glee, and entered into the spirit of all that was going on around him.

The young men had, in the meanwhile, seen all that was worth seeing, and many things which were not worth seeing, and many more which it might have been better if they had not seen. Exhaustless purses bring endless wants ; and they became patrons of the arts, and amateurs, cognoscenti, &c. &c. in music, painting, sculpture, engraving, &c. &c. : were, consequently, initiated into, and made fellows and members of various societies, instituted for various purposes, but, all professing the most disinterested motives, and aiming only at the public good. They sojourned awhile in Switzerland, talking and dreaming of Jean Jaques Rousseau. Then they passed into Italy, and saw Rome and the Pope, and talked of antiques and virtu, and picked up divers set terms rela-

tive to painting, of the meaning of which they had some indistinct conception. Sicily and Greece were visited because it was pleasant to be able to be able to say that they had been to those countries—and then they bent their way homeward through the Austrian territories, and tarried awhile at the sundry mighty little courts which were afterwards conglomerated by Napoleon into “The Confederation of the Rhine.” Among these, each of our heroes lived “en prince,” and by their profuse expenditure, excited a “great sensation!” At length they parted, in the Netherlands, with mutual professions of interminable friendship, and a fixed resolution of keeping up a regular correspondence.

The French Revolution, however, which commenced almost immediately afterwards, revolved the whole machine of European politics with so rapid a whirl as to throw England and France,

like two balls impelled by centrifugal power, at the utmost possible distance from the central point of amity at which they had lain sometime quietly together ;—the consequence of this convulsion was, that although Charles and Louis had correspondent and corresponding inclinations, they found it extremely difficult, and at length dangerous, to attempt to correspond ; and so gradually lost sight of each other.

Charles returned to London, where some tons of statues, coins, vases, paintings, bronzes, and bonzes, “ bas and haut relievos,” mummies and mummeries, had arrived before him. Consequently, he walked amid a crowd of envious or admiring worshippers—a complete lion, like Juno amid the lesser goddesses ;—“ incedit leo,” as Doctor Panglos would say. The shipment he had made was a most lucky hit, inasmuch as it introduced him to the best society of the day, and obtained for him almost as many letters at

the end of his name, as there are papers on the tail of a kite; so away he went shining among the “lesser stars” like a comet, for several years; and *then*——No, fair reader, it was not *then*——but long before, that he had discovered that, with all the excitement of unchecked pleasure, inexhaustible riches, und interrupted health, there was still a “something” wanting. And what? It was no less than the society, the friendship, the *love* of one (if there be such another on the earth) as good, as fair, and as virtuous as thou art. He saw the half forgotten, or if not, only-remembered-in-dreams, form of Clara Haultaught, and he felt that he had done both her and himself an injustice by supposing that it was the extent of her father’s fortune which led him to fancy her so exceedingly beautiful, when he (then on the eve of bankruptcy) had danced with her at Leicester. He knew the old admiral’s failing, (alas! that such

an anomaly should exist as a brave but avaricious man !) and one day, after dinner, told him that whenever he married, observing by the way that he had no such intention, he was resolved never to accept a penny of his wife's fortune, but to settle the whole upon her and her heirs, and even to double the amount, if her parents thought fit.

“ Ah ! my dear sir,” said the admiral, “ if all young men had your consideration—hem—let me see, there's poor Board'em of the Scourer ; two years ago he got posted, and married Commissioner Green's daughter, who had her poor aunt Bet's savings all in her own hands, twenty thousand and more, got foul of the Lord knows how many d—d five-farthing, twopenny-half-penny French merchant-men. You know what followed ; I say nothing—the prize-court, and all that sort of thing—teazed, bothered, taken aback, kept ashore, chaise-and-four, d——n.

You know the rest. Got to Boodle's, half mad. Not a shilling left."

An invitation was a matter of course, and one succeeded another as waves upon the beach.

"I never knew happiness before," said Charles to Clara.

Clara seemed as if *she* had uttered the words, and blushed (how Gothic!) and looked she "knew not where," she told Charles some weeks afterwards, "for there was a swimming mistiness before her eyes."

The old admiral happened at the time to be "missing," and so was every earthly object for the space of three hours, to the eyes and recollection of the two lovers. All they beheld was each other, until—ding dong went the discordant first dinner bell.

"A moment—one moment longer, my *dear* Clara!" said Charles.

The moment seemed scarcely past when the second larum awoke Clara from her dream, and

mechanically recollecting her father's extreme precision, she rushed from the presence of her lover. Absorbed in his dreams of future bliss, he was leaning his head upon his hand, when in stalked the old admiral.

"Ah, Charles!" said he, panting, "How are you, my lad. Devilish hot weather. One would think the good ship Britannia was afloat, and we were all crossing the line together. Ha! ha! eh?"

"True enough," observed Charles.

"Eh? What's that? What's true enough?" asked the admiral.

"I *have* crossed the line," said young Maxwell.

"The devil you have! When, where, how?" ejaculated the astonished seaman.

"Just now," replied Charles.

"Now! why, zounds, boy, you are mad or dreaming."

"Both," replied Charles, "but it is a dream

and delirium that will I hope last all my life."

Then followed an explanation, told in as coherent a manner as could possibly be "expected under existing circumstances." The old gentleman affected gravity, although he experienced a sensation of extreme pleasure: but at length the generous feelings which, in spite of individual imperfections, seem ever to pervade the breast of a British seaman, rose triumphant above all disguise.

"Give me your hand!" exclaimed the admiral, and he clasped it with as much firmness and strength as though he was grasping his sword on the quarter-deck in the day of battle. "But hold, young gentleman," he continued, recollecting himself, "We're running before the wind into a strange port, without taking soundings. You have exchanged broadsides with Clara, I see plain enough. I expected it. I must con-

fess ; so d—n all hypocrisy ; there's an end of *that*. Her colours, my brave fellow, where are they ? Lowered, eh ?”

At this moment Clara entered the drawing-room.

“ Hist ! she comes,” whispered Charles, anxious to save his beloved from the pain her father might at random inflict on her *sensibility*.

“ La ! How delicate,” exclaims some lady's maid. Well, Miss, we can't help it ; we tell the tale as 'twas told to us ; but what a lady's sensibility is, exactly and precisely, we cannot satisfactorily define.

The admiral knew nothing of, or else had forgotten, for “ old men will forget,” all about such matters, and therefore repeated after Charles.

“ Aye, here she comes, sure enough ! and seems taken a little aback. Come, Clary, my dear, the secret's all out. Its no use ‘ shamming Abraham ’ now, so what say you, my own dear little—— God bless you !” Here the old veteran's utter-

ance was stopt by the close embrace of his daughter, who threw herself upon his neck and kissed him with a most vehement alacrity, yet, strange to say, all the while sobbing "to match."

"Come, come, my dear girl, Clary," gasped the admiral, "my love—nay, nay, dearest, don't cry. Have it all your own way; I won't, no, not to be made commander-in-chief in the East. No, no—come, come, d—n it, girl, you'll choke me!—So, then, you won't strike your colours mayhap? eh?"

"Down, down to the ground, my beloved father," said Clara, and sinking on her knees, she grasped those of her parent, whose eyes were suffused with tears, while his face exhibited a strange warfare. It seemed to have been "boarded" by "sensibility," striving hard to overcome its opponent, who had "assumed" the command, and every muscle was briskly engaged, fighting inch by inch. At last down fell the *streamers*; it was all over.

“What a d—d old fool I am,” sobbed the admiral, sinking upon a sofa. Then up rose Clara, and down fell Charles upon one knee; and both of them hung over the old gentleman, and applied, or rather endeavoured to apply, smelling bottles, &c.

“I’m a d—d stupid, lubberly, snivelling old fellow. I never did so but once before, and that was when the lilies came tumbling down first after I was posted—sinking, by G—d! not a shot left; sea running; cou’dn’t board ’em; not a sail in sight; d—n it——see the Gazette. Why do you both make such a fool of me? Clary, Charles, give me your hands; there, there; d—n these stinking bottles! I’m qualmish only, that’s all. Go, Clary, go, there’s a good girl, and—hem! ahem!—bring me a glass of brandy.” Clara, like a dutiful child, did as she was bid. The patient swallowed the medicine as a patient ought, and the medicine did as all medicine ought; it cured the patient, who im-

mediately walked briskly three times up and down the room, and then— they went to dinner.

In the evening of that day, the admiral was closeted with old Bagsby, his lean legal adviser.

“The young fellow’s fortune equal to yours!” exclaimed the man of law. It can’t be, admiral.

“Why not, Sir?” asked the veteran. His father, you know, was a West India merchant; and a British merchant, let me tell you——.”

“Pshaw?” said the other; “but here’s a young fellow who is any thing but a merchant—living like a lord. I don’t suppose he has been to the counting-house half a dozen times since his father’s death.”

“Hem! perhaps not,” replied the admiral; however, the simple state of the case stands thus: He is not to receive a penny with Clary—but whatever I chose to settle upon her and her heirs, he offers to double.”

“The devil!” exclaimed old Bagsby.

“ And that’s not all,” continued the admiral, “ we talked of sums—plain, point-blank sums. Clary’s my only child, said I—and, for myself—with my habits—If I shouldn’t get afloat again, and I don’t see why not—my pay’s enough. One hundred thousand, said I—make it two, says he, if you like, admiral. Suppose, says I—it will save the legacy duty, when the old hulk goes to pieces—Suppose we say three—done, says he, I’ll make it six.”

—“ The Lord have mercy upon us !” exclaimed Bagsby.

“ What’s the matter ?” asked the admiral.

Matter !” muttered the lawyer, “ Hem, matter ? why here have I, for more than half a century, been rising early and sitting up late, making the most of every thing that came in the way ; spending nothing—saving—scraping together, in hopes that in my old age——.”

“ Pshaw !” said the admiral, “ you’ve feathered

your nest well enough, I know—so, no grumbling—but, to business. How long will it take to prepare the deed?”

“ Ah, ah ! ahem ! Let me see. In a case of such moment, my dear Sir, every thing should, you know, be arranged with extreme caution. The amount is immense—it depends much upon the nature of the property—most likely some of the young gentleman’s is in the West Indies—and—ahem ! you know, my good Sir, how precarious such sort of possessions are ; particularly in time of war, when the enemy’s fleets are wandering upon the sea, the Lord knows where——.”

“ The Lord knows where, indeed ! ” exclaimed the veteran, “ I only wish we could catch ’em at it—‘ wandering,’ as you call it—that’s all, but, pshaw ! d—n your six-and-eight-penny opinions about the war. See the lad yourself on the business—my money’s all in the bank of England,

and the papers are in my strong box at Ham-sley's."

The next morning, Charles Maxwell, having supplied himself with the amount specified, from the usual source, called upon the admiral, and they had scarcely exchanged salutations, when Bagsby was announced.

"By the by," asked the veteran, "Has the old fellow called upon you this morning, with his bag, and papers, and tape, and the devil knows what?"

"Who? Sir!" Charles inquired, in a tone of alarm, which raised a momentary suspicion in the mind of his father-in-law elect.

"My lawyer, Sir, Mr. Bagsby," was the grave reply. "He was to call on you respecting the subject of our conversation yesterday, and is now here in the room below by my appointment, in order to arrange the business."

"Oh! is that all?" said Charles, smiling, "Let us have him up, by all means."

Accordingly, the man of parchment (to which epithet the texture of his skin alone might have afforded him a fair claim) was shewn into the presence of his two most wealthy, and of course, most worshipful clients ; towards whom he came bowing, and bending, and grinning, and worshipping, in their persons, his idol MAMMON, in a manner sufficiently ludicrous. After a thousand apologies, and such sort of tom-foolery, they proceeded to business, and the man of law inquired the name of young Maxwell's professional adviser, with whom he felt, no doubt, he should be happy to act, on the present occasion.

“Aye, aye ! like a pair of shears,” quoth the admiral, “Ha, ah ! eh ! Bagsby—cut what comes between, eh ? *not* each other, ah ?”

“I *never* employed a lawyer since I was of age,” said Charles.

“What !” exclaimed old Bagsby, as his rigid

frame started into a perpendicular. (“A sensible young fellow!” thought the veteran.) “Hem, ahem! ahem!” repeatedly repeated poor Bagsby, ere he could proceed to state a few of the various reasons why it was “advisable to be advised, prudent and circumspect, needful and absolutely necessary, &c., &c., in all such and the like and similar sorts and kinds of cases, where and wherein, and in and concerning which property, &c., &c., &c., and all such sort of thing, was various and of numerous descriptions and kinds, both as it regarded and concerned estimated value of estates, &c.—

Here Charles, having been too much accustomed of late to have his own way, became weary of listening, and interrupted the speaker with a most ungracious yawn, followed by a “Pish!” Having thus “caught the speaker’s eye,” as well as stopt his tongue, he proceeded.

“There can be no difficulty in the present

case. I believe, admiral, we understand each other. I agree to settle on your daughter the same amount as you think fit to do yourself."

"Exactly," replied the veteran, and I, to save legacy duty, mean to settle all I have, excepting this house and grounds, which are at an easy distance from the admiralty."

"Nothing can be clearer," said Charles. "The sum is, I think, three hundred thousand."

"Exactly so," said old Haultaught, "and"—
coolly continued Charles, taking out his black morocco leather pocket book, "there—there is the money."

"By the trident of Neptune, and the old girl that holds it!" shouted the admiral. "You're a noble fellow. If you hadn't a brass farthing, Clary should never—But, I'm afraid, my dear boy, you have been too hasty. Have you made your calculations about housekeeping, and so on? I should not like you and Clary to shorten

sail, and if we lock up such a sum as this, perhaps —— ”

“ It will make no sort of difference, I assure you. I shall never miss it.”

“ Wonderful ! ” thought old Bagsby, “ I’ll try and get a share in some West India concern myself.”

The “ instrument ” was immediately drawn up, “ signed, sealed, and delivered,” by the admiral and Charles, as their own “ act and deed ; ” and the next act was marriage.

Then away flew time. Year rolled away after year. The old admiral went to sea again, and had a glorious brush or two, “ short and sweet ; ” and gave Monsieur a smack in “ the chops of the channel.” Then he went to bask himself, like a dry old fish as he was, on India’s sunny shore ; from whence, after the benefit of a seven years’ fry, he returned, considerably increased in wealth. It was a proud day for the

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misbourn

terminated the old gentleman's mortal career. His effigies graced Westminster Abbey, and his Eastern wealth formed another immense accumulating fund, which his son-in-law, for reasons we wot of, felt not so delighted with as is usual in such cases. The domestic felicity of Charles and Clara was perfect.

The termination of our late long-protracted war brought our happy couple to the afternoon of life. Young Charles was a fine young lieutenant, just of age, and with property and interest amply sufficient (to say nothing of certain musty Gazettes) to expect "to be posted," &c. &c. as soon as "propriety would allow." Clara was all that the fondest, aye, or the wisest (and the terms are not *always* synonymous, we fear) of mothers could desire. Had the old admiral lived, he might have altered his opinion—or, perhaps he might not. The fortune which he left her failed not, however, to throw around

her every charm and grace, a dazzling halo, in which, like insects round a flame, a thousand gay, thoughtless, and fluttering ephemera sported, and were blinded, scorched, and “damaged” for their temerity.

But another year passed, and Charles Maxwell, that is, the “old original” Charles Maxwell of our tale, underwent a sad and melancholy alteration. Long fits of mental absence occupied him when in society. No more the well turned repartee or mirthful jest issued from his now pale lips.

Seldom he smiled—and then in such a sort,
As though he smiled in scorn, to think that he
Could e’en be moved to smile at anything.

“*Neque vigiliis neque quietibus sedari poterat,*” as Sallust says of Cataline. In plain English, he was never easy, sleeping or waking. “The consequence” was, that in a very short

whole party when the veteran landed at Portsmouth, and Charles and Clara presented to him their first-born, a fine boy, then eight years of age, in a middy's uniform; and his sister Clara, a beautiful little wax doll, as her mother had been before her. So at least thought Admiral Haultaught, and declaring that she was too beautiful and delicate as yet to be played with by a rough sailor, he seized upon the sturdy boy as his lawful prize; and many a ride, and walk, and gambol, and frolic, and quarrel, and reconciliation, had they together, both in town and country, till the youth was old enough to serve his King. Then,—it was a hard task, but it must be the case with us all,—they parted for the last time.

“Charles Haultaught Maxwell,” said the old admiral, “Remember that’s your name, my dear boy. Fear God and honour your King. Look at the British flag; let it be your business to

see *that* respected wherever it floats, either in a cock-boat or a first-rate ; mind *that*, and d—n all politics. Leave them to the lubbers ashore. Remember poor Nelson's last signals——Well, well, I know you will. But mind—if ever you disgrace your name, d—n me if I leave you a copper bolt.”

“ With this and the like advice the poor old gentleman blessed his beloved grandson, till he delivered him into the hands of an old mess-mate, and saw his young hero borne away upon the green billows from Yarmouth jetty, in the jolly boat of H.M.S. the D——. With his glass he stood watching her progress till all hands were safely on board. “ He walks the quarter-deck now for the first time,” thought the veteran, and a thousand images, created by memory and fancy alternately, kept him company all the way to London, as he sat reclined back in his travelling carriage. A few months

space of time (“*colos ei exsanguis, fœdi oculi, citus modo, modo tardus ; prorsus in facie, vultuque vecordia inerat*”), he got horribly pale, ghastly about the eyes, and became a disagreeable, shuffling, unsociable, uncertain sort of a fellow ; more like a poor lunatic, who fancied himself hunted by devils, than a well-bred, easy-going country gentleman.

The reason for this change was, that he had been calculating, and had discovered that, by the tenor of his engagement with the Gentleman in Black, whom, by the way, we hope our readers will take especial care not to forget, during the silent and almost imperceptible lapse of nearly eight-and-twenty years, his tribute had increased from the minute matter of a moment, to an *annual* demand of two thousand three hundred and thirty days and a fraction, calculating each day at sixteen hours in length, and *all* to be spent in sin. Such was the “demand”

for sin in the then current year. It was true that there had been no grumbling on the part of his ally or adversary ; and supplies of money, when required, which had however rarely been called for of late, were never refused. There were, doubtless, past sins sufficient to keep all square, “ as per agreement,” hitherto ; but Charles could not *flatter* himself that he had sufficient “ on hand ” to make up an amount of four thousand six hundred and six days for the next year, and for that which was to follow, nine thousand !—all was utter darkness and desperation. Yet all this arose from *agreeing* to sin for *one single moment* “ per annum.” Reader, take care you never make such a compact.

Charles had been to Paris the year before, hoping to discover the fate of his fellow-victim, Louis Desonges. The usual mode of finding rich individuals, through their bankers, was, of

course, in the present instance unserviceable, and the police knew no such person. As the crisis of his fate, however, was equally near with that of Charles Maxwell, it is fit we should run over the principal events of his life, from the commencement of the Revolution to the end of the war, or rather wars issuing therefrom, like snakes from a Medusa's head.

During the reign of terror, his riches gained him both friends and enemies; conducted him into prison, and purchased him out; he found that reformers from the crowd, or "canaille," are ever vain and venal. The ignorant make sad use of power, the proper extent of which they cannot comprehend; so they stretch it, as children will a piece of Indian rubber, till it snaps back upon them and hurts their fingers, and then they are glad to let it fall out of their hands. Those among the French evanescent governors who had any *nous*, made their obser-

vations, and most attentively *marked* out those whose plethoric purses seemed to expose them to the danger of temptation, and falling off from their new (not as *we* have it, true) allegiance.

Louis wept over the misfortunes of his country, and, be it said to his honour, the riches of which he had in so strange a manner acquired the command, were frequently devoted to the relief of those whose property had been swept away in the tumult. Among others, the Comte de Tien à la Cour, and his lovely daughter, Emilie, were indebted to him for their safety, and for his company in their flight into Switzerland, where he settled them in a beautiful and retired situation near Vevay, and on the borders of the blue lake Lemman. With certain resolutions in his head, away then posted Louis towards the Rhine, and on the banks thereof discovered and purchased an ancient baronial chateau and estate, together with its title.

“How wretched a thing it is to have to do with lawyers!” exclaimed Louis to the *ci-devant* baron, whose honours he was purchasing, and who might literally have been said (according to the French term “*manger ses biens*”) to have “*eaten up*” his estate. “They are dreadfully slow.”

“Humph!” said the Baron de Braanksdorfischen, “I’ve sometimes found them too quick.”

“When you were not in a hurry, then, I’ll be bound to say,” observed Louis.

“Aye,” was the reply. “Do you purpose living here, Monsieur?”

Louis replied in the negative.

“Then, perhaps, you’ll allow me to shoot, and hunt, and fish on the estate?” asked the baron.

“With all my heart,” replied Louis.

“Then I’m a happy man again!” observed the baron, “and so d—n the old rook’s nest,

and the stones thereof, and the owls, and the ivy, and the——”

“Doucement! Monsieur le Baron,” said Louis, fearing that a sort of Ernulphian curse, in which the purchaser might be included, was commencing; “It’s hardly fair to wish them any ill *now*.”

“If I had never seen them, it would have been all the better,” replied the other, “but I must needs be like other fools; and so I “kept up” my title by knocking it down. Well, never mind now—you say I may sport here?”

“Aye, and live here, too, as before,” said Louis, “as long as you think fit.”

“The devil I shall!” exclaimed the other. “Then I don’t care a straw for what’s past.”

And on that day it was the Baron of Braanksdorfischen’s good will and pleasure to get drunk, from which it will be an easy matter for the reader to guess what sort of a man *he* was.

Louis completed his purchase, and returned

with his new title to Switzerland, where he was most gracefully and most graciously received by Emilie and her parent. And there—the very recollection of the place makes one poetical—

Upon the margin of that azure lake,
Whose limpid waves come rippling to the shore,
He vowed he loved her for her own dear sake,
And she believed—what could a lady more !

They talked and sauntered by that water's edge ;
They talked and sauntered on the mountain's side ;
'Mid foliage, whispering, took and gave a pledge,
We say not what, for love was aye their guide.

And he, as usual, led them Lord knows where.

* * * * *

Notwithstanding divers exquisitely polished expressions of gratitude and friendship, which M. le Comte de Tien à la Cour had, from time to time, addressed to M. Louis Desonges, there was ever a most superb stiffness added to his usual perpendicularity whenever the said Desonges ven-

tured upon anything like familiarity with Emilie in his presence. Like Juliet's father, he thought there *was* something in a name ; and so, when Louis assumed unto himself the title of Baron de Braanksdorfischen, he was pleased to be extremely gracious. As for the matter of pedigree, Louis was of a very respectable family, and felt no sort of compunction at the ingenuity or research of a certain tracer of genealogies, who had undertaken, in consequence of weighty considerations propounded unto him, to delineate a tree of consanguinity. The new Baron was somewhat startled to find that his great grandfathers and great grandmothers were related to, and connected with, several of the most ancient houses in France ; but, he was determined to believe if possible, and that is a great matter in such cases. The document had its expected influence upon the Comte, for it was drawn out and blazoned in due heraldic terms and forms ; and, perhaps,

he likewise was resolved to believe. As for Emilie, like most of her sex, when once fairly in love, it would have been much the same thing to her had her lover changed his name to Bourreau, for she was much of Juliet's way of thinking, that "a rose with any other name would smell as sweet."

"My dear M. le Baron," said M. le Comte, "you must be well aware of the sincerity, I might almost say, the devotion of my attachment and friendship. You are the only man upon the face of the earth, his Catholic Majesty alone excepted, from whom I would have deigned to accept any sort of assistance in the present state of things ; but, my daughter is now, alas ! the sole hope, the only remaining branch of an ancient and most illustrious house ; and, indeed, I am glad to find, what, however, I never doubted, that you really are so closely allied to the Montmorencies, the Grammonts, and the

Choiseuls. When we return to France, I have no doubt that I can, from my connections at Versailles, have the affair of succession arranged; and that my title will descend when I am gone, which, in the common course of things, cannot"—

"I beseech you, my dear M. le Comte," exclaimed the Baron of Braanksdorfischen, "to spare my feelings. I trust you will long live to enjoy your title and estates. I see no reason why you should not marry again, and that they should descend in regular succession to your heirs male."

"Nor I neither, M. le Baron," said the Comte, "It is a good idea. We will see about it;" and forthwith he advanced to a large mirror, and paid his respects to his own respectable figure reflected therein.

The marriage took place immediately, and was, like most other marriages wherein money is abun-

dant, conducted in such a manner as to give an extravagant idea of the happiness of the "happy pair." The most delightful part of the affair, however, was, that Louis and Emilie, now the Baron and Baroness of Braanksdorfischen were really happy, and continued so for a considerable period of time : they say for nearly a month. After that, when the dream of rapture and perfect bliss had vanished, they lived much like other people, and each marvelled occasionally that they should have been so silly as to expect absolute perfection in any human being. They passed, however, many pleasant months in Switzerland : but the leaven of the revolution spread, and Italy was their next refuge—then Malta—then to France—*La belle, la glorieuse*. All was right again, for Paris was as gay or gayer than ever ; so they fell down and worshipped the images which faction, or war, or fashion happened to set up, and thereby proved

they were—born in France, the land of liberty and equality. In the profession of the latter “*égalité*,” they have been most singularly consistent; for, whether he has had a triumvirate, a consular, a regal, or an imperial government, Monsieur has always been *equally* faithful. “C’est égal,” quoth he, on all occasions.

When Napoleon was very short of money once, the Baron de Braanksdorfischen was said to have waited upon Talleyrand; and it was hinted that the elevation of the Baron de Braanksdorfischen to the peerage of France, under the title of Le Comte D’Ormalle, was closely connected with that visit. Be that as it may, from that period our French hero attained a degree of popularity which he kept as long as he thought proper. His family affairs went on comfortably enough, since Emilie never had occasion to ask him twice for money, and he never grumbled at her expenditure. Like his quondam friend, Charles,

he had two children, a boy and girl, who grew up most promisingly; being allowed to do all that seemed good in their own eyes, and to draw money “at discretion.” Whether they spent it discreetly, is another affair, and one of which their parents took no cognizance.

The glory of the great empire—the emperor and king—the young King of Rome—the march of mind, and the march of armies—the invasion of that accursed Angleterre—the merits of Dâvid—the occupation of Spain—the *Talma*—the “Arcs des Triomphes”—les grande batailles—Venus de Medicis—the coronation—bridges over the Seine—charters—oaths of allegiance—operas—calembourgs—Apollo Belvidere—the overthrow of kingdoms, and the sunsets of Monsieur Martin, the bear in the botanic gardens, and of M. M. Pieddouble at the Port St. Martin—and such sort of important matters, equally and alternately occupied Monsieur le Comte de Tien-a-la-Cour, the old grey-headed perpendi-

cular grandfather of the family, Monsieur le Comte D'Ormalle, the Comtesse, and the two young sprigs of rising nobility.

Then away flew time, and with it away flew many of the above, and other, and such like matters—the emperor was *off*, that is, not *on*, his throne; though he kept his title with a tenacity which must have been truly gratifying to his veteran military associates, who could not but have felt convinced, that when he by *nominal* honours rewarded their services, he bestowed what he conceived to be for himself most desirable. Away flew the Apollo and Venus, and the king of Rome, for the march of mind and of armies had taken a new direction; the invasion of England was postponed *sine die*; Dâvid brushed with his brushes to Brussels, for fear of a brush from the sweeping broom of the law; and the glory, the imperishable glory of the empire—its military glory—*that* might have remained to have

embalmed the names of “les braves,” who fought and bled, and devoted themselves for their country, though a tyrant were their leader : but oaths of allegiance, sworn and forgotten, reiterated and broken, tarnished their hard-earned laurels ; and—it is a pity that *filles de chambre* and coffee-house politicians should have cackled so much about the matter, and that obscure *demi-soldes* should claim for *all*, what *some* might yet demand, and will doubtless receive from posterity.

The Comte D’Ormalle had shared those honours which riches may ever command among the sons of men, whether under kingly, imperial, or republican governments. He hailed the return of Louis le Desiré ; yet some thought his coffers were opened during the hundred days—the gentleman in black would scarcely have made any objection ; but it is a point upon which we dare not speak positively.

When Napoleon “ caught a Tartar ” at Mont St. Jean, and all was settled, the Comte D’Ormalle settled likewise at his Chateau D’Ormalle, on the banks of the Loire, where a settled melancholy appeared to prey upon him, and he betook himself to wandering to and fro, like an unquiet spirit ; for he, like Charles Maxwell, had taken his calculations, and was ever balancing, and thinking of a monastery, and—the gentleman with the black coat, Geneva cloak, &c. &c. To these meditations the Comtesse left him undisturbed, and pursued the now indispensable frivolities of the metropolis, where she became the nucleus of a most ancient coterie of the most ancient names and dignified personages ; who, utterly despising the mushroom race of nick-named nobility, congregated where they could safely vent the spleen which they had for so many years been bottling up, while in a state of expatriation.

Having thus seen that the Comte D'Ormalle was not in better plight than Charles Maxwell, it becomes our duty to state their ulterior proceedings under such appalling prospects.

CHAPTER V.

IN the long hours which poor Charles Maxwell now habitually spent in solitude, he indulged himself yet, occasionally, in the dreams and visions of hope ; and, in one of these reveries, he luckily recollected old Bagsby, the late admiral's lean legal adviser, of whose shrewd exploits he had heard many a singular tale.

“ If the old fellow is yet living,” thought he ;
“ and has been going on steadily in the same way ever since I saw him last, he must, by this time, be a match even for the gentleman in black himself.”

With such reflections he lost no time, but

posted to the old fellow's chambers in Lyon's Inn, where he sat, half buried among piles of dusty books and papers, like a lion ant at the bottom of his inverted cone of crumbling sand, ready to seize on any poor animal unconsciously approaching its verge.

Bagsby was delighted to see our hero; for he had not forgotten the three hundred thousand pounds. So he shook him cordially by the hand, entreated him to be seated, adjusted his own wig, stirred up the four square inches of smoking cinders huddled together in one corner of the grate, bowed and grinned, rubbed his hands and his spectacles, bowed and grinned, and bowed and grinned again.

At length Mr. Maxwell did "a tale unfold," which had an effect almost as tremendous as that described by Shakspeare in the well-known passage, the commencement of which we have just quoted. But old Bagsby had been so long

accustomed to intricate cases, that, let him be thrown where he might, he always contrived, as it were, like a cat, to fall upon his legs, and find some place to cling to. So, after a long pause, he thus addressed his client.

“Hem ! my dear Sir, this is an ugly piece of business. Hem—I have certainly heard of this gentleman in black—hem—I remember once fancying that I saw him : but we have many strange characters to deal with in the way of our profession—perhaps I was mistaken. Hem ! But, however, to the point—I think I understood that you could yet obtain supplies, money I mean, to any amount ?”

“I can demand any amount,” replied Mr. Maxwell, “and were it not immediately forthcoming, the contract would then be broken on his part : an event of which I have very little expectation.”

“Hem !—hem—hem,” resumed Bagsby, “In

all such and the like cases, my dear Sir, money has a great effect—it is, in short, one of those things without which even the law of the land itself, beautiful and simple as it is, cannot always take its course. But—really—ahem—this is a very ugly piece of business! *very* ugly.—However, we must not despair. It is astonishing what a free and judicious application of money will sometimes effect: and, as you don't mind expence, I really think we may perhaps contrive to pull you through."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed poor Mr. Maxwell, "my dear Sir! I cannot express my gratitude. But, I remember you were the admiral's friend—Oh, why did I not come to you before?"

"Never mind," rejoined Bagsby, "better late than never. Eh?—Hem. But—to business—no—no, I haven't lived all these years to be frightened at a little intricacy. Many a tangled case have I unravelled. So, hem—in the first

place, allow me to enquire if there were any witnesses to this singular contract?"

"None," ejaculated Mr. Maxwell, gasping the first breath of hope; "No, my dear friend, there was nobody but myself and—you know who."

"Excuse me for interrupting you," said the dark gentleman, stepping forward from a gloomy corner of the room, with his black coat, black waistcoat, black Geneva cloak, black bag, black-edged papers tied with black tape, and all the rest of his black paraphernalia; "It may, perhaps, save you much trouble if, in this early stage of business—"

"Early, indeed!" exclaimed Bagsby, somewhat irritated at the idea of so good a thing being snatched out of his hands; "Why, we have not yet *commenced* proceedings:—but, I beg your pardon, Sir, pray take a seat."

The gentleman in black sat himself down at the table, and drew forth from his black bag a

bundle of black-edged papers, tied with black tape, which, in a most business-like way, he proceeded to untie and lay before him.

“You know, Sir,” said Mr. Maxwell, “there were no witnesses to the transaction.”

“*I* know there were, Sir,” replied he of the Geneva cloak, with a malicious smile; “see,” he continued, shewing a paper to the lawyer, who immediately discerned two signatures as of witnesses, which, however, he could not exactly decipher.

“Hem!” said Bagsby, adjusting his spectacles, and giving his wrinkled old mouth a peculiar twist, which, as it had no particular meaning in itself, might be intended to conceal any outward indication of what was passing within. “Ahem! allow me, Sir, just to run my eye over the paper a moment. Aye, aye—I see—Charles Maxwell—ah—hem—em—bless me, what a cold morning it is. Pull the bell,

Mr. Maxwell! Here, Jerry, my boy," he continued, addressing a lean, spider-like, daddy-long-legs sort of an old man, who answered the summons; "Bring some coals, Jerry—Ahem! Let me see, where did I leave off?"

"You may as well leave off where you are," observed the owner of the black-edged papers; "Keep your coals to warm your chilly old drum-sticks after I'm gone—I'm not so green as to suffer you to keep that writing in *your own* hands after the fire is lighted."

"What do you mean to insinuate, Sir?" asked old Bagsby, waxing wroth; "A man of my standing and respectability, Sir! Do you dare to say that I would be guilty of so——"

"Precisely so," answered the other, coolly.

"Sir, Sir," stammered the lawyer, "I'd have you to know there is such a thing as law."

"Precisely so," observed he of the black bag, "I *do* know it."

“And justice,” continued Bagsby.

“That’s more than you know,” retorted the other.

“And damages,” roared the incensed lawyer.

“Your clients have long been convinced of the truth of *that* position,” drily observed the dark gentleman, taking a pinch of blackguard.

Old Bagsby’s rage was at its acme, and he swore by all the furies and devils in the infernal regions, that he would commence an action for defamation forthwith. But his antagonist took it into his head to relate a certain fable concerning a smoky kettle and its black neighbour, a boiling pot ; whereat the lawyer, like a snail, drew in his horns, being assisted in the retiring movement by Mr. Maxwell, who requested that his business might not be neglected.

“In mercantile matters, I remember,” said our hero, “that, when any difficulty occurred, we used to refer it to arbitration.”

“ Good,” observed the gentleman in black ;
“ chuse your own men, and I’ll meet them.”

“ That’s fair, however,” observed Charles Maxwell.

“ Humph ! ” said Bagsby, “ we must first find fit men for the purpose :—but, ten to one they’ll make a bungling affair of it. There’s nothing like regular legal proceedings, straight forward, as a body may say.”

“ Precisely so,” observed the dark gentleman, “ may say :—but what you call straight is as crooked as my tail.”

To a reference, however, they at length agreed. Mr. Ledger was appointed as the umpire ; and, on that day week, the gentleman in black was to give them the “ first meeting ” at old Bagsby’s chambers. When this matter was settled, the lawyer ventured to hint that he should find it necessary, or rather think it most consistent with the interest of his client, to take the opinion of

counsel on two or three points which had already occurred to him ; and as money was no object—

“ Very true,” observed Charles, feeling in his pocket, and finding he had omitted to bring the needful with him, “ How very thoughtless ! However, Sir, directly I get home, I’ll send a hundred pound note or two—”

“ Pooh ! ” said the gentleman in black, taking out his black morocco pocket-book, “ How many will you have—only say ; just to save trouble, you know—its all the same between us.” So he gave Charles Maxwell five notes of one hundred pounds each, which he immediately paid to the lawyer, who immediately marked them with his own mark, and then the meeting broke up.

On the appointed day, Mr. Ledger, our hero, and the gentleman in black, were all punctual to a minute in their attendance at old Bagsby’s chambers. The wary lawyer having taken his seat, and opened the business of the day, the

gentleman of the black Geneva cloak presented his account, with a sardonic grin, to the individual who had expressed his inclination to settle it. Ledger cast his eye, in a hurried and agitated manner, at the amount, and, addressing himself to Maxwell, enquired if it could possibly be correct.

The poor gentleman cast his dim and floating eyes up and down two or three sides of the tremendous paper, which was carried over and over and over, with dismal tautology; he could deny nothing; and many of the items he but too well remembered. His heart sank within him.

“Give me leave,” said Bagsby, stretching forth his lean arm.

“By all means,” replied the gentleman in black.

“Don’t be alarmed, Mr. Maxwell,” continued old Bagsby. “I have no doubt we shall pull

you through," and he prosed a few minutes over the account, whilst his opponent sat smiling most contemptuously.

"You don't specify here," said old Bagsby, "in what manner these various sums were paid ; whether in specie, or bills, or notes."

"Pshaw !" replied the gentleman in black, "that's perfectly immaterial ; the amount is stated explicitly enough."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," rejoined the lawyer, "it makes all the difference in the world."

"Bank notes are a legal tender," quoth he of the black Geneva cloak.

"No doubt ; but we are not met here to discuss rigmarole theories about the paper currency, which neither you nor I can make head or tail of."

"Precisely so ; I confess myself bothered on that point. It is most delightfully mystical."

"Well, well, to business," said the man of

law, somewhat testily. "Do you mean to give us a clear, specific account, or not, with the dates of payment, number of the notes paid, and every particular? If not, let me tell you"—

"Pooh—pooh!" replied the other, "it is not worth while for you and I to quarrel about a few sheets of paper." So saying, he dipped his hand into the huge black bag, which he had placed on the ground, between his legs, and drew from thence an immense bundle of black-edged papers, tied with black tape, which he then threw across the table, exclaiming, "There, there it is—made up to yesterday. I hope that will satisfy you."

The veteran of the law conned over some of the items, hemming and coughing as he went along; and then, without uttering a word, arose and placed the bundle in his iron chest which he carefully locked; then put the key in his pocket, and resumed his seat at the table.

“Well, Sir,” said the gentleman in black, who had been attentively watching him, “what are we to do next?”

“We must proceed to business,” replied old Bagsby, and ringing a little silver bell, that stood beside him, in came old Jerry

“Jerry, my boy,” said his master, shew in that gentleman from the city.”

“From the city!” exclaimed Ledger, “who is he? Remember, Mr. Bagsby, I should not like to be seen”——

“Never fear,” said the lawyer; “shew him up, Jerry.” Accordingly a well dressed young man was ushered into the room.

“Well, Mr. Crabseye,” said old Bagsby, “are you as confident as ever?”

“It is impossible *we* should be mistaken,” was the reply.

“This gentleman,” continued the lawyer, laying his spectacles on the table, and looking

triumphantly around him, "this gentleman comes from the Bank of England, and has examined the five one-hundred pound notes which you, Sir," looking at the gentleman in black, "paid to my client here, this day week; which he immediately paid to me, and which I immediately marked. This gentleman pronounces them to be forgeries."

"There is not a shadow of a doubt thereof," observed Mr. Crabseye.

"Shew me the difference between one of them," and one of your own issuing," said he of the black Geneva cloak, which moved not a wrinkle on the present occasion.

"Pardon me, Sir," replied Mr. Crabseye, "it is well *we* have some private mark that such gentlemen as you are not exactly aware of:—for upon my word, as it is, it would sometimes puzzle the devil himself to tell the difference."

“Precisely so,” observed the gentleman in black. “Well, Sir,” inquired the lawyer, “you don’t mean to deny paying those five notes to Mr. Maxwell?”

“Not I,” was the reply.

“Then, Mr. Crabseye, you know I have your affidavit, aye—here it is—‘I, Micros Crabseye’—aye—and the more needful papers too”—and again the old lawyer tingled his ancient bell; and again popped in the head of his ancient Jerry, who exchanged a significant nod with his master, and drew himself back again. Then, anon, came stalking in, a portly-looking man, followed by two athletic figures, who looked most marvellously as though they could not understand a joke.

“There, gentlemen, is your prisoner,” moved Mr. Crabseye, and old Bagsby seconded the motion, both pointing to the gentleman with the black coat, waistcoat, Geneva cloak, bag,

and various other black appendages, who sat wonderfully composed, after his first fidget.

The officers of justice proceeded to handcuff their prisoner, who smiled thereat with a most supercilious smile; and, when they had completed their operations, begged that they would do the same kind office for his friend Mr. Maxwell, who for a series of years, as he could prove by creditable witnesses, and even by Mr. Crabseye himself, had been in the habit of passing forged notes. His poor victim felt as though his death warrant was signed, for he knew that at his own house many would be found, and that all his tradespeople must, with one accord, bring forth witnesses against him, if they produced any of the notes he had paid. Even old Bagsby twisted about his lower lip and jaw, most portentously, for many seconds; but recovering his composure, exclaimed, "Don't be alarmed, my dear Mr. Maxwell; I told you we

should be able to pull you through this business, ugly as it is." Then, turning to the pinioned gentleman, he continued, "what you say, Sir, may be very true, for aught I know; but we have forms, Sir, forms of law, which must be attended to."

"Precisely so; I perceive it," and he glanced at his bolted arms.

"In the first place, you must take your oath."

"I—what?" exclaimed he of the black bag.

"Your oath, Sir," resumed the lawyer, "and here is a Testament."

The gentleman in black, hereat, drew his hands from their cuffs as easily as from a pair of gloves, took a pinch of blackguard, and said that if that were the case, he must, from a scruple of conscience respecting swearing, decline to proceed any further in the affair. He then burst into what seemed to Mr. Crabseye and his satellites to be, under existing circum-

stances, a most unseemly fit of merriment and laughter, swearing (notwithstanding his recent scruples), that old Bagsby was a boy after his own heart, and wishing he might live to be Lord Chancellor !

“ Gentlemen ! ” said the man of sables, after his unseasonable mirth had exhausted itself, “ I am sorry that this meeting has been so unpleasantly broken up. I must, of course, attend these good people (pointing to the officers) for the present :—but, make your own appointment for the final arrangement of what we first met to discuss. You will manage it, Bagsby. *Cras aut cum velles—sed ut redirem hęc nocte fieri non potest.* ” Which, fair reader, simply means, that though he could not return that evening, he would attend old Bagsby on the morrow, or at any other time ; and having thus spoken, he was led out of the room by his attendant genii.

No sooner was the door closed upon them,

than Bagsby congratulated his client on their success so far; "Never fear, Sir," said he, "we shall pull you through this business, ugly as it is. I've another poser or two for old Sootikins. But first, my dear Sir, these notes, you see, are worth nothing, and those you have at home"—

"Shall be destroyed this instant," cried our hero, snatching his hat.

"Stop—stop a moment, my dear Sir. If you do, how are we to proceed? For money, you know, constitutes, as one may say, the sinews of the law."

"Never fear," observed Mr. Ledger, "I've brought my cheque-book with me."

"What's that?" inquired Mr. Maxwell.

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!" exclaimed Mr. Ledger. "To see how the enemy may 'pack up,' as it were, a man's mind in darkness and ignorance! That

a British merchant should not know what a cheque-book is! ”

“ Oh ! aye ! I remember now,” said Mr. Maxwell, “ it’s one of the books we used to hire the clerks to write in.”

Mr. Ledger sighed, but was too much a man of business to leave old Bagsby without presenting him with one of the magic leaves from his book, which was received most graciously. He then accompanied his unfortunate friend and partner to his elegant mansion in Portland Place, the furniture and entire arrangement of which paralysed him with astonishment.

They destroyed the forged notes, and Mr. Maxwell was furnished with a cheque-book, and instructed in the use thereof; which appeared so easy, that he wondered why he should ever have preferred any other way of raising money, to the real value of which his unlimited supplies for so many years had utterly blinded him.

He once more repaired to old Bagsby's chambers.—That worthy practitioner spake at great length about a great variety of papers, parchments, and deeds, with a greater variety of hard names than it would be worth while to enumerate on the present occasion ; but they were all *necessary*,—at least so old Bagsby said.

Another meeting was appointed, and as before, the high contracting parties met at old Bagsby's office.

After the usual salutations, the gentleman in black begged to thank the lawyer for having given him a view of the inside of Newgate, “at the doors of which,” he remarked, “*we* are generally much incommoded by the ejaculation of certain words and supplications excessively unpleasant to our ears—many of my oldest friends among you, whom I should never have suspected of praying, have there been visited with such a paroxysm of religious feeling, that

one would imagine they had served a regular apprenticeship to crawl-thumping and psalm-singing. We *nick*-name them the doors of repentance.—But I beg your pardon, let us lose no time, for I have some particular business on the Stock-Exchange to-day—we have a new company or two starting, and have a scheme for a train-road and cast-iron pavement, and loco-motive engines of fifty legion power, traversing between us and——allow me to present you with a ‘prospectus,’ Mr. Bagsby.”

“I beg your pardon, Sir,” replied the lawyer, I don’t admire such presents—hem! I’d much rather not have any share in your concern—ahem! I beg leave respectfully to decline.”

“Well, well—of that hereafter,” said he of the black Geneva cloak, “so, to the matter in question. Have you any thing to propose?”

“Why, my good Sir,” replied Old Bagsby, “we have been examining your account against

my worthy client here, and, really—upon my honour—I must confess it all appears perfectly clear—ahem ! It is an ugly piece of business.”

“It is quite correct, Sir, I’ll warrant,” said the other, rubbing his hands, and then applying himself to his black snuff-box.

“Ahem !” continued Bagsby, “Ahem ! In the first place, Sir, we take exception to every item paid by you in forged notes, which form, with some trivial exceptions, the whole of what my client has received in England.”

“Do you call this *fair* ?” asked the other, “he might have had gold if he had chosen.”

“It is *legal*—sound law,” replied Bagsby, firmly, “not a penny of *that* will we pay.—Bring your action, we are ready.”

The gentleman in black employed himself for a minute in looking over his own copy of our hero’s account, where he beheld sums amply sufficient, he doubted not, for his purpose, which

had been advanced to the unfortunate man in Louis, Napoleons, florins, crowns, ducats, &c., &c., among which those paid for antique statues, paintings, vases, medals, &c., &c., were delightfully prominent.

“We will,” said he, at length, “leave the legality of my paper money to be discussed hereafter—or even, for the sake of argument, allow your position; what have you to say to the rest, advanced in hard cash, to the tune of some million or so of your pounds, in France, Switzerland, Holland, Germany, and Italy?”

“This comes, as I said before,” ejaculated Mr. Ledger, “of visiting Popish countries.”

“Let me tell you, Sir,” replied Bagsby, “I have strong reason to suspect that the whole were of base coinage.”

“Prove it,” quoth the gentleman in black, in a tone of calm defiance.

The lawyer sat humming over the lots of

parchments before him, like a bee buzzing over and bussing a cluster of flowers, dipping his proboscis alternately into each, but settling on none. This disagreeable silence was broken by Mr. Ledger, who addressed the gentleman in black in a manner which somewhat startled his dinginess. "Sir," said he, "you may consider the matter as settled. I hold myself responsible to you for the amount; and my word, Sir, is sufficient. I am willing now to give you a cheque for half the sum, and the remainder shall be paid as soon as my clerks, with Mr. Maxwell, and our mutual friend Mr. Bagsby, shall be satisfied of the accuracy of your account."

"Upon my word, Sir," replied the gentleman in black, while his countenance assumed a decidedly blueish tint, and for the first time he had recourse to his black cut-glass smelling bottle in a black ebony case. "Upon my word, Mr.

Ledger—really. Ahem ! Your way of doing business is so different from what I am accustomed to, that, really, upon my darkness, I don't exactly understand it." And again he put his smelling bottle to his nose.

"We'll pay you off and close the account—draw a line under your name, and so cut the connection for ever," said Ledger.

"My dearest Sir, my much honoured and highly respected friend !" whispered old Bagsby, "are you serious ? can you positively raise the wind to such a tune ? almost a million and a half ?"

"I have said the word," replied Mr. Ledger, "write out a receipt in full of all demands."

The gentleman in black hereat waxed extremely fidgetty, and felt somewhat like a huge conger eel which the tide has left in shallow water, among rocks, and which is attempting to wriggle itself out. Mr. Maxwell's heart was full, and so he spake next, addressing his good

friend and partner Mr. Ledger, thanking him most sincerely for the extraordinary offer that he had made ; but declining altogether to accept thereof, as, let the consequence be to him what it might, he was determined not to involve his friend in utter ruin.

“ Pshaw ! ” replied Mr. Ledger, “ If you had attended the counting-house but once a year, just to look at ‘ the balance sheet,’ you would know better ; but this comes of going abroad, and travelling in Popish countries. What do you suppose I’ve been about with *your* share of the concern all this while ? Make yourself easy, my dear Sir, for after this is all settled, we shall still be found, like the beginning of our old friend’s parchment clauses, ‘ always provided, nevertheless ; ’ ” and the worthy old merchant, in the pride and joy of his heart, laughed at his own joke, and gave a careless glance towards the gentleman in black, who had been employed

with his blackguard and his black smelling bottle, snuffing and smelling, to hide his disappointed malignity. But, like the conger eel aforesaid, he soon shifted his position, and addressing the lawyer, said, "You'll please to observe, Sir, that I have not given up my claim to the bank notes; I merely waived the discussion."

"Remember Newgate," replied old Bagsby.

"I do," said the other, recovering himself; "and have no sort of objection to pass another night there, I felt myself quite at home, I assure you. But," he continued, turning to Mr. Ledger, "do you mean to pay me for the notes?"

The old merchant now, in his turn, looked somewhat confused; but old Bagsby took up the cudgels, and replied, "*We* will do nothing of the kind."

"I make my demand," continued the other, "and if it be not complied with, you must abide the consequences."

“And so must you,” rejoined Bagsby; “let me recommend you to accept, my good friend, the worthy Mr. Ledger’s offer.”

“I want none of your advice,” said he of the sables.

“Once more, as the mutual friend of both parties,” continued the lawyer, “I request you to accede to so fair and honourable a proposition.”

“It is neither the one nor the other,” said the gentleman in black, “I will never agree to it;” and he looked round with an assumed air of carelessness in his turn. The discussion was like the game of see-saw, one up and the other down—but old Bagsby had yet, as he whispered Mr. Ledger, his “great gun” to fire. Wherefore, “attention” being called, he pulled off his spectacles, hemmed three particularly loud hems, stiffened himself as near to a perpendicular as might be, screwed up his courage to the “sticking-

place," and, in a voice as stentorian as his shrivelled, whistling old pipe could compass, (sic ore locutus est) thus spake he to the opposite party.

"Then, Sir, you must abide the consequences."

"With all my heart," replied the other, with a sneer; "do your worst."

"Very well, Sir," said old Bagsby; "then listen! I shall immediately throw the whole business into CHANCERY."

"Into where!" cried the gentleman in black, starting upon his legs, upsetting his black snuff-box and black-guard, letting fall his black smelling-bottle, oversetting his black bag and disarranging his black-edged papers, while his black hair stood erect upon his head, and his black Geneva cloak swelled out rigidly behind, as though thrust forth and supported by a mop-stick.

"Into Chancery," repeated old Bagsby, gravely; "Mr. Ledger will pay the money into Court."



"From whence it will never come out in my time," roared the gentleman in black, like a lion taken in the toils. "No, no—I accept the merchant's offer."

"It's too late now," observed old Bagby, scribbling out some papers; "I expect a Chancery barrister here immediately."

"Then I'm off," said the other, "but remember, Sir," he continued, turning to Mr. Ledger, "Your word is past."

"Aye, aye," replied the wary old merchant, "and you shall be paid too—that's my way—always better pay money than go to law about it. Know the worst of it then. But, remember, a receipt in *full* of all demands."

"Aye, aye," said the other, whose nervous system was dismally affected, "I'll sign anything."

Accordingly, much to the surprise and gratification of our hero, Mr. Maxwell; the venerable



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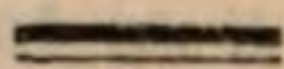
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old merchant produced his cheque-book, and wrote a cheque for half the amount; and then with exchequer bills, bonds, and a tolerable variety of shares in mines, railways, gas-lights, steam-washing, shaving, shearing, carding, and shuffling companies, (in most of which the gentleman who was so partial to a pinch of the black-guard, had already a share) he made up the other moiety. A regularly verbose receipt in full of all demands, was drawn up by old Bagsby, and signed by the gentleman in black. The bonds of sinning were then rent asunder, and committed to the flames, and, once more, Mr. Maxwell breathed freely, as a free Christian ought, and walked arm-and-arm with his partner into the city. The gentleman in black pocketed his recovered treasure, (minus about five hundred pounds, which Bagsby deducted for stamps, &c., due from the receiver, and with which his conscience would not allow him to charge his

clients), and with it went upon his favourite haunt, the Stock Exchange, where, report says, he laid it out *well*, by enriching some "Sir Balaams" of the present day, and giving others the furor for becoming *suddenly* opulent.

CHAPTER VI.



WHILE the transactions related in the last chapter were in progress in London, the Comte D'Ormalle, better known perhaps to the reader as Louis Desonges, was rusticating at his chateau on the banks of the Loire; and had become as dull and melancholy as it was possible for a Frenchman to be.

One evening, being reduced absolutely "au désespoir," he was leaning upon the battlement of an ancient terrace which overlooked the adjacent country for many a league; and his eye rested upon a fresh object at the entrance of

the neighbouring town. "What can it be?" thought he. In his frame of mind any sort of excitement was a momentary relief: so he went for his telescope; and it exhibited to him a cross of the mission, recently erected in the place of one which had been destroyed at the revolution. He gazed for awhile thereon, and then threw himself upon a seat, and became absorbed in thought for the space of at least five minutes. "I have it," he cried at length, "I will send for him immediately;" and, starting from his reverie, he walked towards the chateau, for the purpose of writing a note to request a visit from the abbé of the adjacent monastery.

"It would be a useless exposure of yourself," observed the gentleman in black, advancing from a recess wherein the statue of some sylvan deity was placed, "It could not possibly have any other effect than frightening the old bigot out of his senses."

“Monsieur !” said Comte Louis, somewhat sternly, “I am unused to interruptions of this kind. Had I wished for your advice, I probably might have requested the honour.”

“Monsieur Le Comte,” replied the gentleman in black, “I perceive my error, and beg to apologise ; but the fact is, I have lately been in England ; and really one’s manners are apt to be influenced by the sort of society with which one mixes. No one can dislike their, what they call, “straight forward” manner more than myself. I beg ten thousand pardons. I hope I have the honour to see your Excellency in good health, and that the amiable Comtesse and your dear young people are well.”

Although there was little in all this, yet there was something so graceful in the manner of the dark elderly gentleman, who, by the by, appeared not a day older than when they first became acquainted, that the Comte changed his

tone, and politely requested him to walk into the chateau. Indeed there arose a vague hope within him, that he might be able to make some sort of fresh agreement, and mystify his dark ally; for he had, at one period, dipped a little into the arts of Gallic diplomacy. But it seems that he was not an adept, or else that the gentleman in black was more deeply versed in the science; for, after half an hour's conversation, he still, like Shylock, seemed averse to speaking of any terms not specified in the bond.

“Then,” said Comte Louis, “I shall instantly apply to the church, for there is no time to spare.”

The gentleman in black shrugged up his shoulders and took snuff, and politely handed his black box to the Comte, who had no sooner partaken of its contents, than he remembered some very fine old hock which was in his cellar:

and forthwith the two allies began a sort of carouse, and the Comte's spirits became unusually elevated.

"You may rely upon it," said the dark gentleman, "that good old wine is the most certain cure for lowness of spirits. I really feel myself much better already. Don't you?"

"Why," replied the Comte, "I cannot say but what I feel a sort of a kind of a——"

"Precisely so," added the gentleman in black, "and so, as you were saying about the Comtesse ——"

"Excuse me," said Louis, "I did not mention her name."

"It's all the same thing," observed the other, "you were *thinking* of her. The bottle stands with you! The fact is, that she has all the benefit of the contract. You really don't spend anything yourself: and it would save a vast deal of trouble if she were able to make

use of the black morocco pocket-book herself. If you will obtain her signature to this" (here he produced a small black-edged scroll, tied with black tape) "it might be a great accommodation to all parties. But the bottle stands with you! It's a mere matter of form, but really it would oblige me: and to convince you of my friendship, I pledge myself to require not a single moment of sin from you for the next seven years, if you will merely do me the favour to tell her to sign her name just here. Nothing can be more liberal!"

"Seven years!" repeated the Comte, "hem—seven years—there's something in that!" and he filled his glass and tossed it off. "Seven years—eh—well! Let me see, what is it that I am to do?"

"Nothing more," replied the gentleman in black, "than, as she is your wife, to tell her to put her name to this paper."

"You may as well put it in your pocket again," said the Comte, sighing, "she has not done anything that I have told her to do for these ten years."

"Bah!" ejaculated the gentleman in black, "that comes of your never refusing to pay her bills. Break down her carriages, and get somebody to burn her lace; and then stop the supplies, and I will engage—The bottle stands with you! I'll engage that she'll sign anything rather than be without those indispensable articles."

"Hem," said the Comte, "there may be something in that—(Hiccup)—You are a devilish, knowing, extraordinary, dark, old, elderly, gentleman, and I protest that the idea of the lace is excellent! I'll burn it all myself."

"And I'll engage to find plenty more," observed the gentleman of the black silk purse, "for, to tell you the truth, I was the original

inventor. She'll not be the first woman whom I have caught in that sort of a *net*. Ha, ha! You'll excuse the pun!"

The Comte's recollection was not now perfectly clear: but it seems that he took the black-edged paper, and put it into his black morocco pocket book, and, shortly after, fell asleep.

The next day he departed for Paris; and on his arrival, was informed that the Comtesse had joined a party of her father's friends in an excursion to Fontainebleau. Thus compelled to remain in inaction, he began to feel doubtful whether his once mild and gentle Emilie might be persuaded to favour him with her signature. He felt that she was an altered being, and little like the lovely partner of his walks by Lake Lemman's side: but there arose within him a painful conviction, that he had not been altogether without change himself; and then he began to indulge in reminiscences, which ended

in the ejaculation, "Poor Emilie !" and he resolved, at all events, to delay his intended solicitations for her signature, and see, in the meanwhile, if anything could be accomplished, in his favour, by the church.

The summons of M. Le Comte D'Ormalle had not long left his hotel, ere there appeared before him, in consequence thereof, "a little, round, fat, oily man of God," Dodun by name, a zealous ecclesiastic, who was always happy to wait upon both poor and rich, particularly the latter. He entered Comte Louis's apartment with a most benignant and refreshing smile, and bowed as gracefully as it was possible for such a droll little body to bow ; and then, obeying the waving of the Comte's hand, deposited himself upon a chair. But he had not sat long thereon, listening to Louis's account of the past, ere his "too solid flesh" began, as it were, to "melt and dissolve itself into a dew ;" and, withal, he

trembled exceedingly, for he, like old Bagsby, considered the thing to be “an ugly piece of business.”

He, however, had been brought up in a very different school from that in which the crafty old lawyer had acquired his resources, and was utterly unable to divine how the Comte might be “pulled through.” So he sat, gasping for awhile, looking unutterable things, and then rose up, or rather slid down, from his chair, and commenced a retreat by no means so graceful as his entrance.

“The old fellow was right,” sighed Comte Louis to himself, “I have merely frightened the bigot out of his senses, and rendered myself no sort of service—but, *à propos*—” and he recollected that, in all former difficulties, gold had effected his desired purpose. So he forthwith apologized to the poor ecclesiastic for having introduced the subject without a proper prelude;

and told him that he could not, of course, expect the interference of the church, before he should prove himself a dutiful son; and, moreover, that, as he had immense sums at his command, he thought that the erection of a church, or an abbey, or the redemption of some of the church lands, might be acceptable as a token of his sincerity.

At these words the retrograde movements of the worthy priest were suspended, and he seemed much impressed by such evidences of sincere contrition: and, anon, he ventured to resume his seat, and the Comte prevailed upon him to eat a biscuit, and take a glass of champagne, and to become the bearer of a few rouleaux “pour les pauvres.”

Poor Dodun was unused to champagne; he had never before been the bearer of so much money, nor ever before sat *tête à tête* with a peer of France, or any man capable of building

abbies and cathedrals at his own expence ; and, certainly, he had never before heard such a tale about the gentleman in black. Each of these causes might have wrought somewhat upon him ; but their united effects produced a singular confusion of intellect, insomuch that he took leave of the Comte with many expressions of respect, and a series of rolling bows, during the enactment of which he averred that the power of the church was immense ; that he was an unworthy and humble son thereof : but, yet, M. le Comte might rely upon him ; and that, in short, he would repeat his visit on the morrow.

The bewildered priest told, that night, to his superior, a most wondrous tale, concerning the probable erection of a new abbey, and the visible bodily appearance of the gentleman in black, at which the said superior shook his head, and seemed greatly scandalized, and commanded brother Dodun to retire incontinently to his

cell: and brother Dodun retired accordingly, and was grievously troubled in his dreams until the morning, when he endeavoured to persuade himself that the whole affair was a dream altogether; and probably might have succeeded, but for the presence of the rouleaux, which bore too weighty an evidence to the contrary. So he took them to his superior, who, notwithstanding the irregular proceedings of the last evening, received them and their bearer with great benignity; for brother Dodun was, as his inclination to obesity indicated, a pleasant and harmless sort of fellow, and, withal, an agreeable companion when the brotherhood met in the refectory, and one who understood the meaning of “desipere in loco.”

When, however, the poor fellow repeated his tale, the dignitary's countenance underwent a considerable change; and he called for holy water and a pair of scales, wherewith the pieces

of gold were scrutinized, and each found to be perfectly "comme il faut."

"We have no right to refuse that which is given "pour les pauvres," said the abbé, "let it come from where it may."

Dodun bowed assent.

"As for this Comte D'Ormalle," continued the other, "I feel it to be my duty to wait upon him myself. It appears to me that he is much to be pitied ; and, I have no doubt, is a very amiable man."

The abbé, consequently, paid his respects to our hero, and told him that it was an ugly piece of business ; but that the church was very powerful, and that he was a humble son thereof ; yet that, nevertheless, he should not despair, but immediately proceed to consider the case.

"In the meanwhile I should advise," said he, "that M. le Comte would take into consideration the state of the chapel of Notre Dame de

* * * which is really in such a state of dilapidation, that the faithful are in a perilous situation."

" Might I ask the favour of your becoming my almoner in such a case ? " asked the Comte, taking sundry billets de Banque from his black morocco book ; " I request it as a favour ; for upon my honour, I understand nothing of architecture."

The abbé condescended to grant the boon, and notwithstanding his numerous engagements, promised to see that the money was properly laid out : and then he went his way, well pleased with the result of his morning visit.

But the business in hand was of too great importance to be settled by an abbé ; therefore the abbé went to his bishop, and communicated the interesting particulars of the case ; whereupon the bishop, who was somewhat advanced in years, and moreover of " la vielle cour," crossed himself in divers directions, and shook his head,

while his whole body vibrated in unison thereunto. When he was somewhat recovered, he gave it as his opinion that such transactions had been but too common during the revolution, and in the absence of the Bourbons.

“We must take time to consider and examine into the case,” said he, “it will probably throw some new light upon many of the affairs of that dark period of our national history, when religion existed scarcely even in name. As for the Comte D’Ormalle, I have no doubt, from what you state, that he is a very good subject, and a very amiable man. Indeed I feel much interested in his situation, and shall make a point of calling upon him; therefore, Monsieur L’Abbé, you need not give yourself any further uneasiness or trouble in the affair. What you have done is exceedingly proper and judicious—you may now leave the case with me.”

The bishop forthwith ordered his carriage,

and paid a visit to our hero, who, malgré the honour thus bestowed upon him, felt a little annoyed at the transfer, from hand to hand, of his somewhat urgent business. The bishop, however, conducted himself with the most courtly politeness, and assured him, upon his honour, that it was a very ugly piece of business; but that the power of the church was immense, and that, though he himself was only a humble individual son thereof, he would nevertheless, take upon himself to counsel the Comte not to despair, particularly as he was possessed of the means of doing good.

“There never, my dear Mons. Le Comte,” continued he, “was a time when so many opportunities of evincing sincere contrition presented themselves. The sacrilegious estrangement of the church lands from their original pious and charitable owners, is a crying national evil. I think thereof frequently with alarm. There is

an abbey now, which I have the best means of knowing the value of. It is on the banks of the Loire, and formerly its revenues amounted to more than one hundred thousand livres; but now they are merely nominal, some few hundreds, perhaps, as the best and largest portion of the land has been sold and re-sold half a dozen times, and changed its name as often; and now, I am told, it belongs to some upstart parvenu of the revolution, who bought himself a chateau and title somewhere in Germany, I forget the name, Braanks-something, but that's of little consequence. We have made some overtures to his agent, because it seems that the fellow himself never troubles his head about business. However, I won't trespass on your time, Mons. Le Comte. I merely throw out a hint: nothing can render the church more essential service than the redemption of her lands. It is far better than wasting money on

buildings which must come to decay, whereas land will always, if well managed, produce the means of supporting the establishment respectably in all its departments. I merely offer the suggestion; you will reflect upon it. As for the estate I mentioned,—really I am getting old—I have forgotten the name; but, if you can devise how anything can be effected; it matters little to me individually. At my time of life, and with the accumulated and important duties of my arduous office, one has other matters to think of; but my secretary can furnish you with particulars. I will have the honour of waiting upon you again in a few days; and, in the meanwhile, will take your singular case into consideration.”

Had the bishop mentioned any other estate in France, probably the Comte would have immediately advanced the money for the purchase thereof: but his chateau on the banks of the

Loire, with all the improvements and plantations thereon and thereabout, which were the work of his own head and hands; the “Babylon which he had built;” the place where, he trusted, that his sons and his sons’ sons, for many generations would dwell long and respected, in happy ignorance of the manner in which the family estate was acquired; that, and the thousand dreams thereon dependent, were too dear to be parted from in a moment.

“Beside,” thought the Comte to himself, “I know not if the sacrifice would benefit me in the least. In all probability the old bishop would act like the abbé and the monk; and, having effected his own immediate purpose, hand me over to some archbishop or cardinal, who, in his turn, might transfer me to the inquisition or the Pope.”

Possibly the Comte’s “amour propre” might have been somewhat wounded by the epithets

used by the bishop. No man likes to be called a *parvenu*: and few dislike the term more than the man who has lately mounted a coronet. When left to himself, he again began to reflect. The idea of going to England had frequently occurred to him before; for, to do him justice, he had not entirely forgotten his former youthful friend, Charles Maxwell; he had, however, generally given up the scheme as hopeless, from a notion of the impossibility of finding an individual in a country where there are no passports, even if his friend were in England; but it had been represented to him, that all our countrymen, who were possessed of adequate means, or who were not engaged in some office, were travelling and scattered abroad in all quarters of the globe.

“No doubt,” said he to himself, “Maxwell, if yet living, has bought some unpronounceable title, and is now roaming through Mesopotamia,

or Siberia, or China, or Timbuctoo, or Terra del Fuego, or to the North Pole. One might as well think of finding the wandering Jew as a wandering Englishman. But "c'est egal!" I may as well go to London as remain here while the bishop is taking "my singular case into consideration." However, I will first see Emilie and the children."

Accordingly he went to see his children that day; and, if we wrote for the purpose of exciting the compassionate feelings of our readers, we should describe the particulars of his interview with each. As it is, suffice it to say, that, ere they parted, he pressed them to his bosom, bent over them and sighed; and, as his sumptuous equipage rolled back with him into Paris, he hid his face in his hands, groaned in spirit and wept bitterly.

Yet when his carriage was stopped, for a few moments, in the Boulevards, by a crowd

collected round a bear and three well dressed monkies, the Comte D'Ormalle's head issued therefrom, and he applauded their ape-ish tricks in great apparent glee, and threw a louis to the savoyard, and was, in return, applauded by the populace, who made way for his carriage, and shouted "Vive Monsieur Le Duc!"

Next day the Comtesse came back from Fontainebleau, accompanied by her most perpendicular father, the Comte de Tien à la Cour, the abbé Beueton, his now constant companion, and some half dozen of that highly favoured class which most do congregate about the precincts of a court, pluming and glorifying themselves in the name of ancestors, who would most assuredly, if allowed to revisit "the precincts of the cheerful day," be specially ashamed of their posterity. It seems that the whole party were particularly fond of "news," or, as we familiarly say, "gossip-

ing ;” a science which, with the usual adjuncts of “envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness,” flourisheth greatly among those who are somewhat curtailed in their means, but who have, or fancy they have, great claims and pretensions to respect and consideration.

The Abbé Beueton was an excellent jackall for these soi-disant lions ; and he had scarcely been an hour in Paris, ere he picked up some shreds and patches of the Comte D’Ormalle’s “singular case” from the brethren of brother Dodun, who was reported to have seen divers strange visions, and to have uttered sundry marvellous and portentous outcries during his feverish slumbers.

These “odds and ends,” the Abbé Beueton, as in duty bound, related, in confidence, to his patron, the Comte de Tien à la Cour, who saw fit to extend that confidence to his valet, charging him to examine more particularly into the

business, and to report progress at the next sitting. The valet whispered thereof into the ear of the Comtesse's waiting woman, who was quite shocked at the idea of something dreadful, she knew not what; and her imagination and fear were extremely active during the brief interval, which expired between the communication of the valet, and her being summoned to attend the Comtesse.

“What's the matter with you, Lisette?” asked her mistress, “you look as if you had been overturned. Did the carriage break down? where was it? Has Blousseau brought home that dress yet? There—that silk, you see, is all manner of colours. They have lost the art of dyeing, I think, or the sun is getting nearer the earth. Ah! that's it. I remember Monsieur Salamander's lecture—we shall all be broiled. Don't you think so? Why don't you speak?”

“I’m afraid we shall,” said Lisette, “but it’s a good thing to have a clear conscience. Indeed I should be very sorry to leave so good a mistress, but—here he comes!” and she began muttering a prayer and handling a crucifix, as she saw her master cross the court.

“What can ail the silly girl?” exclaimed the Comtesse, “tell me, Lisette, speak out! you terrify me!”

“I am terrified myself,” sobbed Lisette, “oh, the virgin! who would have thought it? So nice a gentleman!”

“Who? what—what are you talking about? I insist on knowing,” said the Comtesse.

Lisette forthwith revealed all she had heard, and a little more; whereby it appeared that the Comte was haunted by some evil spirit, and the Comtesse averred that she felt no doubt the report was perfectly true, for she had written

to him twice for money, and he had taken no notice of her letters.

“I am glad you bear it so well,” observed Lisette; “for my own part, if the devil was my husband, I should go mad.”

“You are mad already, I think,” replied the Comtesse.

“Oh no, indeed,” said Lisette, “I wish I was; but it’s all true. For you know, my lady, where an evil spirit has got into a man, they are all one, and therefore”——

“Nonsense. Then all men are devils,” added the Comtesse.

“Very likely,” observed Lisette, looking demure, “I am not married, however, to one, that’s some comfort.”

“Nay then,” said the Comtesse, “if you are thankful because you are *not* married, something *very* strange *indeed* must have happened to you; so, sit down like a good girl, and tell me *all* you have heard.”

Lisette had no more to tell ; but thus commanded, she repeated what she had said before, with certain alterations and additions tending to support her theory, that when a devil had possession of a man, the said man was thereby transformed into a devil. The Comtesse, who had never before known the want of money since her marriage, had been not a little nettled at her lord's neglect, and felt previously disposed to confer upon him the benefit of conjugal discipline ; so being a good Catholic, she now resolved to commence with the new and extraordinary accusation against him, which had just met her ear.

When she entered the apartment in which the Comte was sitting, although they had not been separated for more than three months, he arose and hastened towards her with almost lover-like alacrity, and was much surprised at her recoiling from his embrace.

“ My dear Emilie,” said he, “ what ails you ?”

“ Oh, Louis ! Louis !” exclaimed she, raising her handkerchief to her eyes, “ how dreadfully you have deceived me ! Are you not ashamed to look me in the face ?”

“ Ashamed, Madam !” exclaimed the Comte, “ may I be permitted to have the honour of inquiring what you can possibly mean ?”

“ May I,” asked the Comtesse, drawing herself up into as commanding an attitude as might be, “ may I be permitted to have the honour of inquiring who you are ?”

“ Who I am !” ejaculated the Comte, and glancing aside at a mirror, as though, for the moment, dubious of his own identity.

“ Yes,” said the Comtesse, “ who you are. Tell me, who are you ?” and she held her handkerchief and fan with as much formality as, in ancient paintings, kings and queens up-

hold the *insignia* of royalty, for she had resolved to get up a scene.

“Really, Madam,” replied the Comte, “there is something utterly incomprehensible, I had almost said ridiculous, in all this. Will you do me the favour to explain?”

“No, Sir,” was the reply, “the explanation must come from you. Once more I ask you, who are you? what do you call yourself?”

“I beg to be excused from making any reply,” said he, somewhat haughtily, for a sudden thought struck him. He had heard of ladies who, when enervated by the fatigues of dissipation, were in the habit of reviving their drooping spirits by Eau de Cologne, Rosolio, &c., &c., and sometimes, by accident, mistaking the proper quantity. It was a painful and degrading reflection, but he could not tell otherwise how to account for a lady’s not knowing her own husband. Therefore he likewise drew himself

up into an erect position, and added in a cold and constrained manner, "it is quite useless, Emilie—Madame, to continue this conversation *now*. To-morrow, perhaps, you will be more yourself; at present, you are evidently under the influence of—of"—

"Of—of what?" exclaimed the Comtesse, reddening with anger.

"Oh! nothing—nothing," replied the Comte, cavalierly; "I suppose it is the fashion, Madame—only of—of—evil spirits."

"I possessed by evil spirits!" ejaculated the Comtesse. "You are pleased to be facetious, Monsieur! But, no! I will not be turned from my purpose. Listen! (here the lady assumed what was intended to be an awe-imposing attitude) listen and know, wretched man! that thy secret is discovered."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the Comte, and a sudden qualm rushed across his mind,

as he thought that between the monk, and the abbé, and the bishop, and the bishop's secretary, and all their official and confidential friends, it was barely possible. The consequence was a visible agitation, and an involuntary ejaculation of "Le Diâble !"

"Precisely so," said the Comtesse ; and the Comte was convinced, by that phrase, that the gentleman in black had betrayed him. "Yes," continued the Comtesse, "Le Diâble, indeed ! That is the very thing. I know all about it."

"Then, Madame," said the Comte, after some hesitation, "you cannot but pity me. You must be aware that I have, hitherto, concealed the truth from you, merely to save your feelings, and that I have made use of my wealth and consequent power to promote your happiness."

Here the lady was quite overwhelmed by the violence of contending emotions ; for she had only pretended to believe Lisette's tale for the

purpose of producing effect. Now, however, her husband had, as it seemed, confessed his devilhood; and, therefore, on that hint she spake, and called him by a great variety of names, and vowed that she had been entrapped, and deceived, and most exceedingly ill-used, and withal that she had always suspected that there was something very mysterious about him.

It would seem that the habit of having her own way for so many years had changed the Comtesse when delivering her sentiments; and her spouse could not help comparing the cutting vituperations, to which it was his fate to be now exposed, with the silvery tones of his beloved Emilie before marriage; and he rashly ventured to say something thereupon. The consequence was a repetition of the epithets before mentioned, with the addition of a few more which happened to occur to the Comtesse's recollection; and the whole was terminated by something very like

hysterics, (but not precisely so, for the Comtesse was not much given to nervous affections), and the angry avowal, that had she known or suspected the truth, notwithstanding his riches, rather than have married him, she would have seen him in the very worst and deepest part of a very bad place, that shall be nameless here.

“ I don’t believe a word of it,” said the Comte, who felt somewhat exasperated in his turn.

“ Don’t you, Monsieur Diâble ? ” exclaimed the incensed Comtesse ; “ but you shall see that I have a spirit ; for I vow that you shall never see my face again ; ” and, with these words, she rushed out of the room.

Whether the lady meant this as somewhat more than a mere lover’s vow, or whether the Comte really believed she would keep it, can scarcely be ascertained ; for she instantly began to collect some unpaid bills, respecting which she had been lately annoyed ; and he, imme-

diately on being left alone, took a pinch of snuff, shrugged up his shoulders, and observed that "something worse might have happened;" and then summoned his valet, and ordered him to prepare for a journey to England, which he had resolved to commence immediately.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN the Comte arrived in London, he found no difficulty in obtaining the address of his quondam youthful friend, Mr. Maxwell; and their meeting was such as might be expected between two persons who have frequently, during a protracted separation, thought upon the days of "auld lang syne."

Comte Louis listened to the particulars of his brother bondsman's escape, with a degree of patience which is seldom bestowed upon long stories: and was not the less anxious for an introduction to old Bagsby, because he could not exactly comprehend the nature of the threat-

ened Chancery suit, with which that ancient limb of the law had so effectually alarmed the gentleman in black.

The two friends accordingly repaired forthwith to Lyon's Inn, where they found the lean veteran at his post, and received that sort of welcome which rich clients usually experience from experienced legal advisers.

Mr. Maxwell introduced the Comte and his business : and the Comte himself endeavoured to elucidate the subject ; but he spoke such an odd sort of English, as might have tended to perplex any one, except an old lawyer, who had lived more than half a century in the midst of botheration and intricate investigation.

“Humph !” said the man of parchment, after patiently listening to his client's statement, “Humph ! This is an ugly piece of business !” and he pulled off his spectacles, and laid them on the table, and threw himself back

in his chair, and projected his under lip, and began to pull it with the forefinger and thumb of his left hand, while the two friends, but more particularly the Comte, watched his motions with no small degree of anxiety, and a most profound and respectful silence.

After a brief pause, there appeared a gleam of cunning exultation lighted up in the old fellow's eye; and his wrinkled mouth, in spite of the hold upon the under lip, pursed itself into somewhat like a corresponding smile. Divers other contortions followed, such as one might suppose to have been in fashion among the Sybils; and, at length, he spoke oracularly.

“Humph! This is an ugly piece of business! But, however, Sir, if you will put yourself entirely in my hands, and follow my directions implicitly, I think we need not despair. Indeed I have no doubt we shall be able to pull you through.”

“ Est il possible ! ” exclaimed the Comte, “ my dear Sir ! What a fool I have been to waste my time in parleying with ignorant monks and priests, instead of coming to you ! I am perfectly enchanted and astonished at your abilities ! It is a disgrace to your highly polished and polite nation that you are not Lord Chancellor ! ”

We have here given the substance, rather than the words of Monsieur Le Comte D’Ormalle, and mean, during the recital of what happened to him in England, to adopt the same plan, inasmuch as, if we were to repeat his Gallicisms, the effect produced might be somewhat too light and ludicrous for the serious nature of our tale. It is not to be expected in any case that foreigners can speak like natives. Indeed, the gentleman in black had told our heroes many years before, when they were commencing their travels, that, notwithstanding his friendship

and wish to oblige them, he could not assist them in that particular.

“For,” said he, “in spite of the constant intercourse which I have with various nations, the continual alterations in idioms and phraseology, and the coining and changing of words are such, that I am frequently puzzled myself.”

In the present case, however, the Comte's bad English was of little importance, since most persons can understand flattering speeches, however indifferently they may be expressed.

Bagsby, therefore, bowed his acknowledgments, and muttered somewhat about its being a man's duty to be satisfied, if “in these times he could get bread and cheese, and make both ends meet.”

Mr. Maxwell, who had now, under the instruction of his father's old friend and servant, Mr. Ledger, become somewhat like a man of

business, requested Bagsby to communicate his plan for the discomfiture of the gentleman in black : and the Comte, having declared, upon his honour, that he would act, in every respect, as he should be directed, the man of law made him produce his black morocco book, and compare some of the notes therein with others which were in the office, and which had been brought directly from the bank.

Spectacles and magnifying glasses were used, but the trio were unable to discover the smallest difference ; and Bagsby could not refrain from heaving a sigh at the recollection of the toil and difficulty which he had experienced in amassing the few he was able to call his own ; while the Comte had only to open his book and take out any number he thought fit. He knew that there was not a word about interest mentioned in the bond, and strange visions came over his mind, of the immense profits which,

with his knowledge of things in general, he could make of an unlimited capital under such circumstances. "I'd be bound very shortly to pay the dingy gentleman his principal," thought he, "and realize a handsome fortune." And again he sighed and appeared, for a few seconds, lost in a reverie, from which he was aroused by Mr. Maxwell, who said that he had business in the city, and must be moving.

The lean limb of the law forthwith began to unfold part of his plan, and instructed the Comte to purchase bullion and foreign specie with the notes aforesaid. "We will never," said he, "allow any of the forgeries to be carried to account against you by the gentleman in question; and you may very shortly, in this way, realize a sufficient sum to set all straight with the old fellow."

The Comte was highly delighted with the

scheme, and immediately commenced operations, by going into the city and buying, at a somewhat apparently dear rate, divers weighty packages of Napoleons, louis d'ors, &c., &c.: and, when the market was somewhat thinned of gold, he began to speculate in silver.

These transactions, which we here briefly relate, occupied many days, and caused a rise of no small magnitude in the prices of gold and silver bullion. Indeed the subsequent scarcity of the precious metals throughout the British empire, and the depreciation of paper money, respecting which so many opaque pamphlets were written, have been supposed by some to date their origin from these and similar transactions. That is to say, from endeavours to pay the gentleman in black, what appeared to be his due.

In the mean while he did not remain idle. The demands of the Comte D'Ormalle upon the

black morocco leather pocket-book, were too frequent to escape the notice of so nice a calculator; and, after some inquiry, finding how matters were going on, he called upon Bagsby, and had a long private interview with him, during which it is said that high words past between them: but the exact particulars never transpired.

The immediate result, however, was, that old Jerry was despatched with a letter to the Comte, desiring him instantly to change his quarters, and take lodgings in some retired part of the town, and, on no account whatsoever, to shew himself in public.

With the former part of this advice his client instantly complied, being assisted in his research for a snug retreat by Mr. Maxwell: but, alas! all men have their weak sides; and there are certain pleasures so bewitching and fascinating to us all, in our turn, that even the dread of the gentleman in black himself, is not suffi-

ciently powerful to deter us from the enjoyment thereof.

The Comte found it utterly impossible to absent himself from the opera : and, having made up his mind to go, he found little difficulty in persuading himself that he should be as completely concealed in the midst of a crowded audience, as in his own lodgings. Therefore he went to see his countryman, Monsieur Piaffeur, achieve a complicated dance with the two Mademoiselles Rebatins ; and was so delighted with the performance of the trio, that he could not avoid exclaiming, “*Superbe et magnifique ! Bravo ! et encore !*”

Some half score pair of eyes were immediately turned toward the enthusiastic applauder, who, with a chilly and uncomfortable feeling, recognised among them those of an old acquaintance, who had formerly sported a pompadour coat in the Palais Royal.

The Comte, who was considered somewhat of

a proficient in the art, resolved to "cut" him, and accordingly armed himself with his snuff-box and eye-glass, and acted his part "*à merveille*," gazing as unconsciously as possible at the individual in question, and then turned away to look at something else, with an expressive shrug of the shoulders, which said, as plainly as shrug could speak, "No, Sir, I certainly have never had the honour of being introduced to you."

But the gentleman in black, instead of being put out of countenance, seemed much diverted by this display of sang froid, and forthwith repeated the poor Comte's exclamation, "*Superbe et magnifique! Bravo! encore!*"

Whereupon the Frenchman again hoisted his shoulders, and said "*Bourgeois!*" and redoubled his efforts to appear perfectly at ease, and consequently drew upon himself a double share of notice.

Now it happened, fortunately, that Mr. Maxwell was at the opera that night; and it was yet more fortunate that his attention was drawn to the spot, where this little scene was enacted in the pit. He had become, as we have observed before, under Mr. Ledger's tuition, somewhat of a man of business, and, therefore, he knew that delays were dangerous, so he instantly despatched a friend who was in the box with him, to summon old Bagsby to the seat of action, feeling, no doubt, that the gentleman in black was contemplating a *coup de main*: and it was well that he did so, for the lean and learned man of law arrived just in time to witness the caption of his client by Messieurs Tappem and Grumps, two of the legal "operatives" on such services, who acted under the orders of Mr. Micros Crabseye, of whom we have had occasion formerly to speak.

Mr. Maxwell offered bail to any amount in

behalf of his friend ; but Mr. Crabseye declared bail to be quite inadmissible, as the prisoner's offence was of a capital nature. " Indeed," said he, " if it were not so, and the proofs were much less plain, there have been so many forged notes in the market lately, that it is our duty to the public, as well as to ourselves, to make an example whenever we have it in our power."

" Humph !" coughed Bagsby, whose presence then was first perceived, " Humph ! this is an ugly piece of business ! But," he whispered to the Comte, " keep up your spirits ! I have no doubt that we shall be able to pull you through."

" Who sent for you ?" exclaimed the gentleman in black, who appeared much ruffled and forgetful of his habitual politeness, at this unexpected and unwelcome apparition of one of the very few persons in the world, by whom he had been outwitted.

“What’s that to you?” asked Bagsby, with the same degree of urbanity, “If you had agreed to my reasonable proposition, and let me have a pocket book ——”

“Pshaw!” exclaimed the gentleman of the black books, interrupting him, “Reasonable, indeed! I’m not such a fool as to pay a high price for what I’m sure of getting for nothing. No, no,” and he began to laugh at his own joke, as was very customary with him, and to take snuff with great glee, while Bagsby appeared to be trembling with passion, and literally foaming at the mouth.

“We can’t waste our time,” said Mr. Micros Crabseye, “Come Tappem! Come Grumps! Do your duty.”

“There is no occasion for violence,” said Mr. Maxwell. “Let the gentleman be treated according to his station in life, which is that of a peer of France.”

Messrs. Tappem and Grumps receded two steps at this information, but kept their eyes steadfastly upon the prisoner, while Mr. Crabseye very inelegantly remarked, that it was all gammon and humbug, and that he had no notion of foreign counts and marquesses.

The scene had hitherto been enacted in the lobby of the theatre: but, as a crowd began to collect, Mr. Maxwell offered the use of his carriage, by which, and a hackney coach, which Mr. Crabseye had in waiting, all the parties were speedily removed, "as per agreement," to a neighbouring hotel; Bagsby taking an opportunity, during the transit, of recovering his lost temper, and whispering certain instructions into Mr. Maxwell's ear, in consequence of which, immediately on entering the hotel, that gentleman gave orders for wines and refreshment to be placed on the table.

When they entered the room it wanted pre-

cisely twenty minutes to twelve o'clock. It was an anxious time for the poor Comte, who had his black morocco leather pocket-book about him, containing many of the notes in question, the discovery of which upon his person would, he knew, render his case absolutely desperate.

But neither Mr. Maxwell nor old Bagsby had forgotten that, provided the said notes were not previously produced, they would, according to the bond, vanish at midnight.

The former, therefore, politely addressed Mr. Crabseye, telling him that he had frequently heard of his extreme vigilance, and that it was much better that, as in the present case, an innocent man should be put to inconvenience, than that the guilty should escape. "Really, my good Sir," he continued, "the Bank of England, nay, I may say the public in general, are greatly indebted to you. For my own

part, as a partner in a house of some eminence in the city, I feel a degree of personal obligation, which, upon my word, I hardly know how to express."

"Very likely not," observed the gentleman in black, who was as well aware of the value of time as any of the parties. "Do me the favour, Mr. Crabseye, just to cast your eye on that gentleman; and then, perhaps, you will recollect certain forged notes being traced to him some time since."

"I know the gentleman and his firm, Maxwell, Ledger, and Co.," replied Mr. Crabseye, "We have kept a sharp look out, I promise you: but all's right there. I don't know a more respectable merchant in the city, than Mr. Ledger."

"He's an old hum-drum, line-ruling, dot-and-go-one, calculating, plodding, sneaking, inanimate, old-fashioned, rusty, old square toes!"

exclaimed the gentleman in black, forgetting himself for a moment, in his rage against Mr. Ledger, of whom he never liked to hear. But recollecting himself, he continued, "I beg your pardon for being warm. I never had but one transaction with the person of whom you speak, and that was anything but satisfactory. However, he is not here now—that's one comfort!—So I beg leave to observe that the prisoner ought immediately to be searched; or, *even now*, the ends of justice may be defeated."

"There can be no occasion," said Mr. Maxwell, "for treating a gentleman with such indignity."

"He knows better," observed the gentleman in black, sarcastically.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Mr. Maxwell.

"Aye, aye," cried Bagsby, strutting forward, "What do you mean by that insinuation? I

beg you to understand that a British merchant ——”

“Confound all British merchants!” exclaimed the man of the black cloak, “Really, Mr. Crabseye, if you do not immediately order these men to do their duty, I will not answer for the consequences.”

Here old Bagsby jogged Mr. Maxwell’s elbow and whispered, “Pick a quarrel! Kick up a row! Go it! Anything for the sake of time! it wants only ten minutes!” and then the cunning lawyer lifted up his own voice, and addressed the gentleman in black, saying, “I’ll tell you what, Mr. what-d’ye-call-em, a British merchant is not to be lightly spoken of by such fellows as you. What are you? Where do you come from? Pray, Mr. Crabseye, my worthy friend, where did you pick up this ragamuffin of an informer?”

“It can be of little consequence,” replied

Mr. Crabseye, with much dignity, "we are not in the habit of revealing the sources whence we obtain our information. This gentleman has lately made several discoveries of importance to us. Perhaps he may have had a hand in some awkward business; but what of that? we *must* have evidence, and we *must* make examples of some; and you know the old adage, 'Set a thief to catch a thief,' eh?"

"Aye, aye," cried the gentleman in black, he knows that proverb well enough, and its application too: for if it were not for that feeling, there would be little enough to do in his office at Lyon's Inn. He! he! he! However, pray, my dear Sir! don't lose any more time, but begin to search. It will be of no use presently."

"That's all my eye and Betty Martin!" ejaculated Mr. Grumps, "I've got my eye-teeth about me, I'll promise ye; and if so be as the

gemman goes to throw anything away without my seeing it, I'll eat it, that's all."

"The thing's morally impossible," observed Mr. Tappem. "He an't the first noble gentleman we've had hold on by a pretty many."

"These men have been tampered with!" exclaimed the gentleman in black, angrily.

"What does he say?" cried Bagsby, "what! my friends Tappem and Grumps! I'll be bold enough to say that they are as worthy and honourable men, as any about the courts. A pretty sort of a thing it would be indeed, if honest men's characters were to be at the mercy of a fellow like this! But I'll tell you what, gentlemen," he continued, whispering to the officers; "he's got plenty of money I know; and if I was in your place, I'd make him pay pretty handsomely, or bring an action against him. For (here he elevated his voice, and spoke as loud as possible) character—character, gentlemen, is every thing,—

“ ‘Who steals my purse, steals trash ; ’tis something—nothing ;
’Twas mine, ’tis his, and has been slave to thousands :
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.’ ”

“ Aye, aye,” roared Grumps, strutting up to the gentleman in black, “ who steals my purse, steals trash—but as for my good name, why, it—has been—slave to thousands—what is it ? I don’t understand poetry. Howsomever, the short and the long of the business is, I shan’t stand no nonsense ; and so, if you don’t make an apology ”——

“ Ah, to be sure,” said Tappem, “ an apology, or else come down pretty handsome ; why, look ye, Mr. Black-and-all-black ! mayhap you may find you have met with your match, that’s all. Ah, to be sure, he who filches from me my character, robs me of that which an’t of no use to him nor nobody else, and it’s a burning shame.”

The moment Tappem was silent, Grumps resumed ; and the instant Grumps was silent, Tappem spoke ; and sometimes both spoke together ; and as they waxed warm, their language became more obscure and *slangish* ; so that after a few minutes, the gentleman in black, who had in vain endeavoured to stop them, found it utterly impossible to tell what they were talking about, although he was himself strongly suspected of having lent a helping hand in the compilation of a “ flash ” dictionary.

Bagsby having thus succeeded in making a diversion in favour of his client, helped himself to a glass of wine, rubbed his hands, smacked his lips, and indulged himself in a sort of cackling laugh, as he witnessed the perplexity of the black bond-holder ; and then he put his fore-finger to the side of his nose, and winked and nodded at the Comte, and said, “ Never fear, Sir ! never fear ! It’s an ugly piece of

business, but I have no doubt we shall be able to pull you through."

The gentleman in black perceiving, by this time, that he had no chance of silencing the two orators of the handcuff, appealed to Mr. Crabseye ; but that gentleman, assuming an air of *hauteur*, coldly observed that it was utterly out of his power to interfere ; yet, that he could not help remarking, that gentlemen could not be too cautious in their remarks, and that all sorts of insinuations against men's characters, unless they could be substantiated by evidence, were highly improper ; and he concluded by averring that, to his own belief and knowledge, Messrs. Tappem and Grumps were most highly respectable and honourable men. Hereupon the two gentlemen last mentioned, evinced their approbation by a simultaneous cry of "Aye, aye !" and a moment after, the clock struck twelve.

"Hurrah !" shouted Mr. Maxwell.

“Bravo ! bravissimo ! very good !” exclaimed Comte Louis.

“Tol lol de rol,” squeaked Bagsby, apeing the gaiety of his companions, by snapping his fingers and holding up one of his shrivelled legs as if about to cut a caper.

“I told you how it would be !” said the gentleman in black, addressing Crabseye.

“Told me what ?” inquired the inquisitor of bank notes.

“It is of no use to search him *now*,” observed the gentleman in black, sullenly. “I told you how it would be.”

“Told me what ?” repeated Crabseye.

“It’s past twelve,” was the reply.

“He, he, he ! ha, ha, ha !” chuckled Bagsby.

“Ho, ho, ho ! why, you don’t understand the gentleman, Mr. Crabseye, he told you the clock would strike—ho, ho, ho ! oh dear !” Here his cough interfered to prevent any farther remarks,

and the gentleman in black, having tapped his black snuff-box and taken a pinch of black-guard, appeared to have recovered his equanimity, and calmly told Mr. Crabseye that he had nothing more to observe on the business, as the prisoner was secured, and the law would, doubtless, take its course.

He then shook hands with Messrs. Tappem and Grumps; and the contact of his fingers with their palms had an almost magical effect; for they not only ceased to ask for apologies relative to the injuries inflicted upon their characters, but declared that they thought all along that he was "a real gentleman." He then gracefully folded his cloak about him, and politely took his leave of the party. Mr. Micros Crabseye very shortly followed his example; and Mr. Maxwell, after listening, with evident satisfaction, to something whispered in his ear by old Bagsby, went next.

The remaining four then sat down to table; and the Comte, implicitly obeying every direction of his skinny lawyer, called for champagne, which came at his call, and disappeared forthwith in the hands of Tappem and Grumps, whom Bagsby proceeded to address: "Gentlemen! my friend here is a Frenchman, and doesn't understand a word of English; therefore, it's no sort of consequence what we say before him: so, first I must tell you, for the sake of your consciences, he is no more guilty of forging notes than I am. Perhaps he may have passed one or two innocently—that might happen to any man—but, as for forging, he has no notion of it—indeed I suspect that fellow that gave the information."

"What!" said Grumps, "him as just went away, whom we jawed a bit about our characters?"

"The same," replied Bagsby; "I have my reasons."

“Come, come, that won’t do!” cried Tappem, “we’re not to be bamboozled in that way. He’s a gentleman every inch of him, and I wish you were as much of one, that’s all! Come, here’s to your reformation, (and he filled himself a bumper) you sly old fox! You’re up to some gammon or other now, I can see, by the twinkling of your eyes, and your jaw-pulling trick. Aye, aye, what, you’re laughing, are you? Well, well, you may as well tell us what it is at once; for we’re all friends, and it’s getting late.”

Upon this hint Bagsby spoke to the officers in terms by no means ambiguous; and a very brief interval elapsed ere the party were proceeding along the streets in a hackney coach, towards Mr. Tappem’s private residence, wherein it had been previously arranged with Mr. Crabseye, the person of Comte Louis was to be secured for the night. Ere they mounted the vehicle, Mr. Grumps had walked round it, to see that

the straps and other matters were in good order ; for Bagsby observed that several of his friends had met with unpleasant accidents, from the shocking inattention of hackney coachmen. This precaution, however, seemed to be in vain, though we dare not say it did not answer the purpose, for, in passing along a narrow street, something gave way, and the crazy vehicle heeled over on one side. The Comte, Bagsby, and Tappem, found little difficulty in extricating themselves, as from a trap-door ; but poor Grumps lay at the bottom, and declared his leg was broken, and his humane comrade was peeping pitifully into the dark abyss, and lamenting so grievous a disaster, when the Comte, under the directions of Bagsby, discharged the contents of his snuff-box into his face.

“ My eyes ! oh, bless my heart ! I can’t see ! ” said Tappem, clapping his hands before his eyes.

“ This way,” whispered Bagsby, taking the

Comte's arm, "it's all right," and he led him through one dark alley into another, and turned to the left and the right, and the left about and the right about, for the space of about half an hour; and then they suddenly emerged into a wide street near a bridge, where they found Mr. Maxwell waiting for them in a chaise and four. So the lawyer took a *brief* leave of his client, who took a seat in the vehicle, and arrived in his native land in good time for dinner.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE morning after the events related in the last chapter, old Bagsby found himself very lonely in his gloomy office in Lyons Inn. The magnitude of the Comte's transactions, in which he had so recently been engaged, made the "six and eightpences" appear exceedingly insignificant; and he conned and looked over the petty items of his regular clients with a languid eye, then pulled his lip, thrust the papers from him, threw himself back in his chair, looked at the accustomed thrifty modicum of small coal in one corner of the grate, and sighed.

While he was in this frame of mind, the door opened, and the gentleman in black made his appearance, and politely expressed a hope that he saw his learned friend in good health and spirits.

“Middling,” replied Bagsby, “I believe I caught a bit of a cold last night. Heugh! heugh! I don’t like late hours.”

“I am particularly partial to them,” said he of the black cloak, placing a chair near the fireplace, and seating himself therein in a quite-at-home sort of a manner, “I recommend them particularly to all my friends.”

“Humph!” grunted the lawyer, “very likely. But what’s your business here! I am engaged, you see, and have no time for visits of ceremony. The case in which we were engaged is now removed into another court, and I hate morning calls.”

“There again,” exclaimed the gentleman of

the black-edged papers, "that's very extraordinary! I am particularly partial to them. The sort of conversation which generally passes on such occasions pleases me exceedingly, that is, in a small way. Somewhat in the same manner as the *six and eightpences* contribute to your comfort, eh? You comprehend? When there is no business on a large scale to be done, eh?

"Is that all you have to say?" inquired Bagsby, doggedly turning to the table, and rummaging among the papers and deeds, as though seeking for some document of importance.

"Not exactly," replied the other. "You managed that business last night with your usual skill, and I wished to express to you that I do not feel the least animosity on account of the event. I confess myself to have been out-generalled. But, my dear Sir, (here he drew his chair somewhat nearer the lawyer), now

the Comte has returned to his own country, of course you do not any longer consider him as your client."

"Humph!" said the old limb of the law, "that depends upon circumstances. There is no process against him at present—but—ahem, hem! my cough is very troublesome."

"Well, well, never mind," continued the gentleman in the black suit, "I like to come to the point at once with those who understand business; and so, without farther preamble, as the Comte's business in this country may now be fairly considered as terminated, you cannot, in any way, be concerned in the ultimate arrangement of his affairs."

"Hem, heugh, ahem!" coughed Bagsby, "that depends upon circum—but—ahem! my cough is exceedingly troublesome."

"Precisely so," observed the gentleman in black; "I perceive it. Well, my dear Sir, the

simple matter is, that, from what I have witnessed of your talents, and considering you now to be perfectly at liberty, I wait upon you this morning for the express purpose of putting myself into your hands."

"What!" exclaimed Bagsby, thrusting back his chair, and starting with his body erect therein, while his arms were stretched forth to their full extent, and his shrivelled hands grasped the elbows thereof, with a violence which seemed to threaten dislocation to the ancient seat of his plodding industry. "What?" cried he again, and his lean limbs appeared stiffened beneath their parchment covering into an unnatural rigidity."

"Precisely so," calmly resumed the gentleman of the black paraphernalia, "in three words, I wish to ask your advice."

These words had an almost magical effect on the man of law. He immediately got the

better of his rigidity and surprise, recovered his self-possession in an instant, and even his troublesome cough appeared to be very considerably amended; for he, forthwith, commenced a speech of no small length, in which he acknowledged that he felt sensibly affected by the confidence which his new client was disposed to place in him: that he was aware how frequently he was engaged in suits of various descriptions, and that really the offer was too flattering—too tempting—too—and then, and not till then, he began to hem, and again complain of his cough.

“Precisely so,” observed the gentleman in black. “Well, there must be a beginning: so now, as the Comte, by running away from the country, has left you perfectly at liberty, I wish to know what, in *his* case, you would advise *me* to do?”

“Humph!” said Bagsby, “it is an ugly piece

of business ! but, my dear Sir, as we are, comparatively speaking, utter strangers; that is, I mean, in comparison with what we may be in future—”

“Precisely so,” observed the dark gentleman; “proceed.”

“Well,” continued the man of law, “under such circumstances, I am sure, my dear Sir, you will excuse my freedom,—but, ahem, hem, my cough is very troublesome ! under these circumstances, I say, I am sure you will excuse,—but it is a rule that I laid down for myself many years ago, when I first went into business,—I am sure you will excuse, but really, there are so many—hem, hem ! my cough is very troublesome.”

“Then come to the point at once,” said the gentleman in black, somewhat testily, “are you willing to assist me with your advice ?”

“Not unless I have something in hand to

begin with," replied old Bagsby, speaking as plain as though he had never coughed in his life.

He had so frequently, in the course of his practice, experienced the potency of this proposition, in putting an end to many a promising conference, that even the knowledge of his client's wealth could not prevent him from watching his dingy countenance with some anxiety.

But the dark gentleman was evidently gratified by this display of the ruling passion, and his eyes twinkled as he replied "Precisely so. Nothing can be more reasonable! I have no idea of cheap law. It would be a pretty sort of thing if justice were to be *given* away! quite contrary to *my* ideas of propriety, I assure you. Shocking! just as if it was a thing of no value. Ho, ho, ho! ha, ha, ha! upon my darkness, your're a capital old fellow; I admire your rule exceedingly, and hope it will become general



G. C. T. THOMPSON.

throughout the profession. So here goes!" Uttering these words, he began to pull out from the pocket of his black inexpressibles, the long black elastic silk purse, of which we have so frequently had occasion to make mention, while the lean lawyer sat with greedy eye, as fold after fold came forth from its dark abode, like a cable from its tier on shipboard, and were arranged in voluminous coils upon the ricketty old office table, which literally began to groan beneath their weight. Yet still the interminable process went on, while the black purse bearer, to whom the work was as easy as though he was handling gossamer, diverted himself by watching the changes in old Bagsby's countenance as the heap accumulated.

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At length the dark elderly gentleman suspended his labours, though the end of his magical purse had not yet become visible, as it extended from the table to his pocket like

a rope. What its precise length might be, Bagsby could not guess: but, judging from other purses, it might be about half way out, for the owner thrust his finger and thumb into an opening, such as may be seen in the centre of every-day money bags, and drew forth a coin of the value of seven shillings, which he placed before the admiring lawyer, and in a serious, business like tone, and with a face of surpassing gravity, said, "I shall thank you to give me change, that is, fourpence."

The ancient lawyer had been gazing upon the wonder working heap that was piled upon his table, with a strange intensity; and his feelings were of a most complicated nature. He had some indistinct notion that a great part, if not the whole, might fall to his share; but, nevertheless, there stole upon him an inward misgiving that there might be some danger in receiving a fee from such a client; and withal,

a chilliness and fear, and trembling, took possession of him ; the rigidity of his muscles gave way, and his knees smote one against the other. Therefore the words which were addressed to him, for the purpose of contrasting his usual gains with the prospect before him, fell unheeded upon his ear.

Not receiving any reply, the gentleman in black looked up, and instantly perceived the state of the case.

“Smell this, my dear Sir!” he exclaimed, handing one of his black glass bottles. “There—there—you are better now, I’m sure. What has been the matter with you?”

“Yes—hem—yes,” replied old Bagsby, sniffing at the specific, “oh, ah—it was nothing. I was subject to such fits when I was a boy: but it is a long time, a very long time, since I have had an attack of the kind.”

“What do you call it?” enquired the gentleman in black.

“Oh, nothing, nothing,” replied the lawyer, endeavouring to appear quite at ease, “it was only a recurrence of early prejudices.”

“*Only* a recurrence of early prejudices!” exclaimed he of the elastic sable purse. “Do you call that nothing? allow me to tell you, Sir, that there is scarcely anything to which I so decidedly object as such reminiscences. And, permit me to say, Sir, that a gentleman of your experience and good sense ought to be above such follies and weaknesses. What old woman’s tale have you got into your head? Really, my dear friend,” (here he changed his tone, which had been somewhat harsh, into one of mild entreaty and persuasion) “I did not expect this from *you*. You have now been acquainted with me for some years; and I should have imagined that the ridiculous fables of the nursery, which represent me as a remarkably ill-behaved personage, and positively frightful

in appearance, had long since been eradicated from your recollection."

"One is not able," replied Bagsby, in a sort of semi-apologetical manner, "to command one's feelings at all times."

"So it seems," observed the gentleman in black drily, "but, one would think your own senses sufficient evidence to contradict the trumpery fabrications to which I allude. Look at me, and say if you perceive anything disagreeable or even ungentlemanly in my appearance."

Bagsby looked up, and such was the effect of the slight attack which he had undergone from "early impressions," that he spake but the truth when he replied, "I must say that I have seen you look better in every respect."

"If such be your opinion," said the dark elderly gentleman, "it is useless for us to attempt to proceed to business this morning,"

and he immediately began to haul home the coils of his long black silk purse from the table, into his black breeches' pocket.

Bagsby looked on and sighed, and was just in the act of calling out "stop!" when the door of his office opened, and in walked Messieurs Maxwell and Ledger. The scene now changed as quickly as in a pantomime. The black purse rushed like a live thing into its place, and its owner arose and took a polite leave of the lawyer, and bowing to the two other gentlemen, ventured to remark that he would not interrupt their business with Mr. Bagsby, as he was just about to take his departure.

"The sooner the better," replied Mr. Ledger, sternly, pointing, at the same time, to the door; and straightway the gentleman in black sneaked off in a very crest-fallen sort of manner, as the vulgar saying is, "with his tail between his

legs," insomuch that the lawyer was astonished at perceiving the extreme diminution of his importance, and the mean and abject manner in which he made his exit, keeping ever at a most respectful distance from the stern and upright old merchant.

Old Bagsby is not the only individual who has been saved from the machinations of the gentleman in black, by the recurrence of "early prejudices," and the company of those whose presence is particularly objectionable to that personage.

If any consolation were requisite to the man of law for the disappearance of the long black purse, it was immediately forthcoming in the shape of full and liberal payment for all expences, charges, attendances, consultations, stamps, messages, &c., &c., incident upon the case, and in the transactions of the Comte D'Ormalle during his visit to England. When

these matters were arranged, Mr. Maxwell stated that, although the Comte had left England, it did not follow that he should be forsaken by his friends; and therefore he proposed that, as soon as Mr. Bagsby could make it convenient, he should follow him to Paris.

To this suggestion the lawyer would not, at first, listen for an instant; but rose from his seat, and paced the room in very evident and great agitation, muttering "me—me—what? I go abroad! Me! why I never was more than ten miles out of town in my life, except once, and then I'd better have been in bed all the while," and forthwith he began a long and tedious tale about a journey to Bath, which was attended with inconveniences, incivility, overcharges, narrow escapes, impositions, and all the various *et cetera*, by which "shabby" or inexperienced travellers are beset, and with the narration of which they inflict no small penalty

on such as are compelled to listen thereunto. The listeners in the present case, however, had an interest at stake in keeping the story-teller in good humour; and Mr. Ledger gave a significant nod to his partner, which said, "let the old fellow have rope enough! give him time."

So when the elaborate tale was ended, they extolled him exceedingly for the judgment and discrimination of character that he had evinced in the said journey, and declared that he was perfectly competent to travel into any part of the known world. And so it was that old Bagsby was caught in his own trap, for he had really, while speaking of his unfitness for locomotion, been endeavouring to show off; and, like most of us, he was highly delighted at receiving a compliment upon his knowledge of that, respecting which he was in utter ignorance. In common with the generality of men who live apart from the world, he had a

very sufficiently good opinion of his own talents and acquirements. Therefore, when he spake of his ignorance of French customs, manners, and laws, it was a mere feint or *ruse* to enhance the value of his services ; for he verily believed himself to be a match for the gentleman in black, in whatsoever part of the world he might happen to meet him. Such being the case, he was soon persuaded, by liberal promises held out to him by those who had ever acted liberally towards him, to proceed with the business in question, even into the French courts ; and immediately the consultation was at end, he began to make preparations for his departure.

On the fourth day after these events, a packet sailed from Dover for the opposite port of Calais, with what is termed a side wind ; and on the lower or leeward side of the said packet, sat the lean lawyer of Lyons Inn, in a woful state of agitation, both mental and corporeal. It was

the first time that he had beheld the sea ; and, consequently, as the little vessel heeled and pitched about upon the face of the billows, he imagined that she was in imminent danger of upsetting, and was, literally, undergoing the horrors of a storm. The keenness of the sea breeze, moreover, affected him not a little, and rendered it very desirable that his poor body should be enveloped in certain paraphernalia, which he had purchased for an expected nocturnal journey overland, and which, for economy's sake, he had packed up in his portmanteau. But that was deposited in the cabin below, whereunto his legs refused to carry him ; and alas ! there was no ringing the bell for Jerry. So the poor old fellow sat and shivered, and thought of that meagre worthy, and of the quiet and steadiness of Lyons Inn, and, ever and anon, peeped through his watery eyes upon the lessening cliffs of his native land. From this

deplorable state of helpless endurance, he was roused into activity by the imperative demands of the God Neptune ; therefore he arose, and, much to his mortification, superadded to the usual tribute, a pair of spectacles and a new hat and wig, which went floating astern amid a burst of laughter from some of the unfeeling crew. But there were other good Samaritans on board, who pitied the lawyer's case ; and he was soon enveloped in a coarse seaman's blue coat, and a striped woollen cap was placed upon his head ; and, thus metamorphosed, he sat in doleful dumps, as though he had been regularly enlisted into the sea service.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! ” laughed a deep hollow voice close at his elbow, “ why, old Jerry himself would hardly know you now, my dear Sir. How do you find yourself ? Allow me to offer you a pinch of snuff.”

Bagsby turned sharply round, and was not

a little startled to find the gentleman in black sitting at his side, apparently quite at ease. "What," continued the dark intruder, "you are surprised, eh? precisely so! I perceive it; but, the fact is, my dear Sir, I am a great traveller—at home—every where. Quite a cosmopolite; and, wherever there is any business to be done, there I am. So I thought, as you would be quite at leisure during the passage, and we shall be secure from interlopers, we might as well take this opportunity of talking over the affair in which we are respectively engaged."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," replied the lawyer, distantly, and assuming as much dignity in his new, or rather, old dress, as if enveloped in the Chancellor's robes, "I am *not* at leisure."

"Precisely so," said the gentleman in black, in a most imperturbed manner, "that is as you think. But the fact is, I have a propo-

sition to make to you, which, as a man of sense, observation and calculation, I am confident you will find much more to your advantage than going on this wild-goose chase. I have made a brief memorandum on the subject. Just do me the favour to look over these papers."

"I have lost my spectacles," replied old Bagsby, sulkily.

"My dear Sir," said the man of the black-edged papers, "I will lend you mine with pleasure," and dipping his hand into the black bag, which stood as usual between his legs, he drew forth a black shagreen case, from which he took a pair of spectacles, mounted in black tortoise-shell, and politely handed them to the lawyer, who forthwith began reading, and seemed much interested in what he read: and, in the meanwhile, the gentleman in black walked up and down the deck, taking

snuff with as much sang froid and ease as though he had been on *terra firma*. An ejaculation from Bagsby, however, effectually disturbed his equanimity, and he snatched his spectacles from the old fellow's eyes, and exclaimed, "you know, Sir, I have a particular antipathy to swearing!"

"My dear Sir," said the lawyer, "allow me to finish. The scheme is wonderful!"

"Precisely so," replied the owner of the spectacles, resuming his seat. "Loans to young and thoughtless spendthrifts, are by far the best speculations in which you can employ yourself. What with immediate profits, accumulating interest, extended connection, introductions and future contingencies, upon my darkness! I know nothing equal to them. And, as for the needful, I am sure I shall always be ready to advance on your *own* security. But read on"—and, thus saying, he returned the spectacles.

It has frequently been a matter of doubt with old Bagsby, whether he really did read anything on that occasion, or whether the spectacles he wore had not a magical effect upon his optics ; for he seemed, as in a vision, to behold a succession of individuals, many of them personally known to him, approaching and proffering him securities for immense loans. Then came others of the higher class of commoners ; and anon, followed nobles of the first rank, either for the same purposes, or to effect exchanges of immense extent and value. And, as he looked on, the old lawyer's self-importance gradually increased : and he beheld his professional duties so much extended, that his offices, instead of being confined to three dark rooms in Lyons Inn, seemed to occupy the whole of one side of one of the new squares, including separate departments for conveyancing, and every other species of legal transac-

tions. On and on went the process, and princes, dukes, and marquesses appeared to be waiting his convenience, till at length, in the portly form of one, he recognized Majesty itself; and so utterly was the old fellow lost in the delusion, that he exclaimed—“It is the King himself, God bless him!” In an instant the spectacles were snatched from his eyes, and instead of being, as it were, enthroned in the midst of his suite of gorgeous rooms, he sat, a poor lean, shrivelled, meagre old man, trembling and helpless as a child, at the mercy of the winds and waves, while the gentleman in black stood scowling over him.

There are certain poisons, which, when exhibited in too great quantities, have a tendency to counteract their own deadly effects on the human system: and thus it was with the wonderful prospects which the dark designer had presented to his intended victim. He had over-

dosed him ; and he plainly perceived his error, and was about to plan a remedy, when the lawyer's good genius interfered in the shape of a somewhat mountainous wave which broke over the little vessel and pitched him forward upon the deck, where he fell upon his knees, and, in that position, under the influence of bodily fear, he uttered his third and most fervent ejaculation.

Thus, in consequence of his loyalty and seasonable fear, Bagsby was freed, for a time, from temptation to swerve from the path of duty. The gentleman in black was no more seen on board during the voyage ; and when they arrived at Calais, there was no small uproar among the sailors at missing the "dingy fellow that seemed to have his sea legs on board," and who, they vowed, must have fallen over-board, as they would defy even the old one himself to "bilk his passage, or escape the Douaniers on landing.

CHAPTER IX.

PREVIOUS to Bagsby's arrival in Paris, it will be necessary to look a little into the state of things there.

After the Comte's departure, matters went on much as usual at his hotel for the space of a week ; and then M. le Comte de Tien à la Cour, who prided himself not a little on his skill in such matters, was much scandalized at the manner in which that most important meal, dinner, was served ; and he could not avoid saying some severe things, to certain of the servants in waiting. He had, however, too

much of the (good in that respect) old school about him, to begin scolding regularly in the presence of a few guests, who did him the honour of taking their commons with him “en famille;” and, therefore, satisfied himself, for the moment, with a glass of champagne, and pulling a face and pushing away from him portions of certain dishes which, truth to tell, well merited the name he gave them of “detestable,” inasmuch as they were sent in by the “Marchand” of “Patisserie” for the express purpose of (as we say in England) “getting up a row” for the sake of coming to an explanation. The fact was, that the said “Marchand” had heard an extraordinary tale relative to the Comte D’Ormalle’s connection with the gentleman in black, which tale he had most stoutly taken upon himself to contradict, because he had had the honour to serve the table of M. le Comte (and no nobleman, he was confident,

kept a better table) for many years, and had been always regularly paid whenever the Comte visited Paris. But, alas ! such is the fleeting nature of even a good name, that, when M. le Comte suddenly left Paris without discharging his bill, he began to doubt. Therefore, when the Abbé Beueton called upon him, (as he felt himself bound to do, seeing that his patron the Comte was but ill-disposed toward the frican-deaux, &c., of the said artist,) the said artist spake of his wife and his large, and increasing, little family ; and, after brief explanation, came to the usual issue of “ a large bill to make up,” “ disappointments,” “ arrangements to make, &c. &c.,” all which the abbé said had nothing to do with the matter in question ; but which, nevertheless, he should represent in the proper quarter.

The poor Comtesse Emilie had never, since her marriage up to that period, known what

trouble or anxiety were. She had spent her time in a constant round, or rather, a series of circles of gaiety and dissipation. As for money, she had no idea of its value. It seemed to her merely a sort of custom to put one's hand in one's pocket if one lost at cards, or hold it out and receive something if one won. And as for bills, they were to be referred to the steward or the Comte. The case now, however, was very different. She had no money, the steward had no money, and Monsieur le Comte was gone nobody knew where. At first it struck her as a very good joke, an exceedingly ridiculous sort of distress, and so she went and told her most perpendicular father, who averred that, so far from conceiving the thing to be a joke, he considered it to be a very serious, or as Bagsby would have said, "a very ugly piece of business."

"But, nevertheless, my dear Emilie," he

continued, "as it really makes very little difference to me where I live, I shall make it a point not to leave you unprotected in your present situation, but wait and see the end of the affair. In the meanwhile, despatch your toilet as quickly as possible, or we shall be late at the Duchesse de Cherceleon's select party."

To that party and divers others they went; and day after day passed on, yet the Comte D'Ormalle came not, and the poor Comtesse remembered with grief, and something very nearly akin to self-reproach, the manner in which they had last parted. Duns became more frequent, and less polite and ceremonious; and even her own maid, Lisette (who, by the way, firmly believed that the Comte had been carried off by the gentleman in black) began to exhibit symptoms of peevishness and disrespect."

"Sweet are the uses of adversity!" The Comtesse sat alone, removed from the summer

flies of her prosperity, and thought on bygone days of happiness with her dear Louis—how he had anticipated her every wish: and then she recollected the princely style in which, without hesitation or remark, he had so long supported their, or rather *her* splendid establishment in Paris. It had been the envy of all. What was the consequence? Where was poor dear Louis? Had he destroyed himself? No! That was too horrible. She would not believe *that*. “And, yet,” she continued, “when I think on my extravagance! But, oh! I dare not look to the future!” and then the poor repentant lady wept.

Let it not be supposed that her nature was so completely altered as to be ever in this frame of mind. But in such a mood she was, when Comte Louis, after his narrow escape from London, arrived in Paris. She had been thinking of him alone for, at least, ten minutes, and had even murmured his name, and said, “Oh! what

would I give to see him !” when he rushed into the apartment, and in a moment she was in his arms, vehemently sobbing, and expressing, as well as she could at intervals, her delight. And the poor Comte ! He perceived there was no “acting” in the case, as he had whilome suspected in bye-gone-days. All was real ; and he pressed her to his heart in fervent joy and gladness. Neither of them had been so happy for years.

The next morning all the duns were dismissed in a way perfectly satisfactory to their feelings ; and then the Comte visited Messieurs Lafitte, Barillons, and the other bankers to whom remittances had been sent in consequence of his transactions in England, and found the amount of his balances so immense, in French livres, that he began to think he should have a handsome surplus, after discharging the whole of any accounts on black-edged paper which

the gentleman in black could produce against him. A little consideration, however, convinced him of his error on that head, and, for a short time, depressed his spirits. Indeed, there are very few of us who would not be somewhat startled at beholding the sum total of what *all* our expences and extravagances would amount to in eight and twenty years. So the Comte D'Ormalle sighed, and ordered his carriage and took a ride with his dear Emilie in the Boulevards, in order that his arrival might be generally known; and the consequences of his re-appearance were a multitude of calls from the Comtesse's dear friends, and a visit from the old bishop to himself, on particular and private business.

The ancient and formal ecclesiastic was far too tedious to be endured in detail by the reader. Let it suffice, therefore, to observe, that he still kept harping upon the alienated Church lands,

declared that he had thought much on the Comte's singular case; but really—he scarcely knew, &c., &c.,—and finally, that he had thought fit to convene a sort of council,—a few learned friends, men of distinguished parts, who had already held several meetings on the subject, and were to assemble again on the morrow,—when he trusted that the Comte would have the politeness to attend.

On the morrow, while the Comte was debating on the subject within his own mind, he was most agreeably surprised by the appearance of his lean legal adviser, poor Bagsby, who, in spite of the alarm, fatigue and battering that he had undergone, instantly decided on attending “the Committee,” as he called it.

“There will be no business done in our first interview,” said he, “I understand the nature of such meetings, and shall plead fatigue as a reason for not entering deeply into the subject.

But I shall have an opportunity of making my observations, and of judging what sort of people we have to deal with."

The council in question were assembled in a circular Chapter-house-looking building, connected with one of the religious establishments in Paris, which it would scarcely be correct to name. The Abbé of Grandesdimes was president, and the lowest place at the board was occupied by brother Dodun, who was admitted among his august superiors, in consequence of his having been the first person intrusted with the business in question.

"So we may expect to see the Comte to-day," said the president, taking his seat. "What time do we dine? Whose turn is it to order dinner? Ah! I remember now, my dear Franchelippe, we may trust to you always. But really, it seemed to me, that the last time we dined at Very's, we were not precisely treated

with that sort of respect which I could have wished. These miserable English at the restaurateurs are quite a nuisance ! ”

“ Les bêtes ! ” exclaimed the Abbé Nigaudin, shrugging up his shoulders and elevating his eyebrows in an attempt to look wise.

After a few more observations and questions equally important, a lean, cadaverous looking member of the council, Rateleux by name, put on his spectacles, and, opening a huge manuscript volume that lay before him, said, that, if the president would give him leave, he would read a few extracts from certain scarce works of the ancient fathers, which appeared, in some measure, to bear upon the case in point. And, then, after hemming three or four times, he began his task in a slow monotonous tone, and, doubtless, the hearers were much edified thereby, as what he read was written in good old monkish Latin.

“When this process had gone on for some time, it was interrupted by a gentle tapping at the door; and brother Dodun, by virtue of his office, as no menials were allowed to be present at this important consultation, went to ascertain the cause.

“The Comte D’Ormalle is come,” said he, gently, on his return to the table. Then followed a whispering conference among the brethren, whether they should awaken the president; but that pillar of the church missed the soothing tones of brother Rateleux, and saved them the trouble of deciding.

“Admit the Comte by all means,” said he most graciously, as soon as he understood the state of the case: and brother Dodun forthwith performed his office, and requested the Comte to walk in. The Comte accordingly stepped forward, and, with a slight nod of acknowledgment to the humble brother, “en

passant," advanced towards the table where the dignitaries were sitting. Dodun then attempted to close the door ; but finding some obstacle in the way, peeped behind to ascertain what it might be, and was in no small degree astonished and dismayed at finding his face close to that of our old friend Bagsby, who pushed forward without ceremony, and followed the Comte.

A fearful exclamation from the janitor communicated his alarm to the council board, and there was a general "sauve qui peut" movement among their reverences, which was with some difficulty arrested by the Comte, who assured them, on his honour, that the gentleman was *only* his lawyer. Yet, for some minutes, there was a dead silence at the board, and the members thereof eyed the intruder and his bag with looks of suspicion : and it must be confessed that Bagsby's appearance was far from prepossessing ; for, not being able to procure a wig

of his own pattern to supply the place of that which had gone to sea, he had cheapened a second-hand "Brutus," thinking it would do very well till his return home. Now the said "Brutus" was black, and large, and full made, and overshadowed, with a profusion indicative of much earlier life, the pale and shrivelled face of the ancient lawyer; so that the "tout ensemble" was most unnatural. Added to this, Bagsby, like most other men who do not often enter into a joke, when he did relish one, enjoyed it exceedingly; and the mistake which had just occurred, tickled the old fellow's fancy so much, that he could not avoid chuckling and cachinnating to himself in a manner that appeared very unseemly in such august presence.

Brother Dodun, obeying a graceful wave of the president's hand, placed a chair for the Comte, and Bagsby thereupon, without waiting for any invitation, took one for himself; and

then the abbé of Grandesdimes, in his official capacity, addressed the Comte D'Ormalle in a set speech, wherein he took occasion to say much, of the condescension, paternal feelings, learning, &c., &c., of their venerable and noble diocesan, by whom they had been deputed to examine into this very mysterious affair. "We have," he continued, "already made considerable progress: but there yet remain certain deep and knotty points to be investigated, on one of which we were deliberating at the moment of your arrival. I assure you, Monsieur Le Comte, the laity have little idea of the way in which we of the clergy occupy our time—the midnight oil—the ——"

Here old Bagsby's cough was extremely troublesome, and the Abbé Nigaudin muttered "Bête !"

"But," continued the president, "far be it from me to arrogate, either for myself or brethren, any other merit than what we may fairly

claim for patience and perseverance. For those qualities, my son, you may faithfully depend upon us; and, in the meanwhile, remember that the power of the church is immense. It is true that I and my brethren here are but individual and humble sons thereof; but, nevertheless, we venture to counsel you not to despair; particularly as you are possessed of the means of doing good."

Here the president sat down in a state of exhaustion, and then there was a whispering and looking at watches round the table, and then an adjournment until the following day. On rising from table, each of the members paid their respects to the Comte, and each in his turn, rang the changes upon the old topic, "the immense power of the church, &c," except brother Rateleux, who squeezed the Comte's hand, shook his own head, and said it was an ugly piece of business.

Bagsby attended the council on the following

day, in the character of plenipotentiary for the Comte, and caused a great sensation by affirming that he would not advance a single louis, on account of any expences that might be incurred, until the business was settled.

This determination, in which the lawyer was inflexible, caused the despatch of a messenger to Rome, from whence he returned laden with official documents called absolutions, indulgences, &c., which professed to exonerate the Comte from the consequences of the various sins which he had agreed and been compelled to commit: and then the gentleman in black made his appearance before the board, to argue the case in person. The uncomfortable feelings that simultaneously took possession of all the ecclesiastics, when he first introduced himself, very soon subsided: and he, after making his obeisance in a style of courtly elegance, took a seat at the board, and pulled a variety of black-

edged papers, tied with black tape, from his black bag, and placing them on the table, looked round him with an air of calm composure that seemed to say, "Here I am, ready to answer anybody who has anything to say to me."

In the meanwhile Bagsby had attached himself to a member of the council, who was likewise a Jesuit, and, consequently, well versed in the science of "mystification." These two worthies sate opposite the gentleman in black, to whom the lawyer nodded in a knowing oblique manner, which spake as plain as nod could speak "I'll bother you yet, old fellow!"

After the minutes of the last meeting had been read over, the president made a speech, during which, we are sorry to say, old Bagsby's cough was again exceedingly troublesome, and the dingy plaintiff himself was compelled to take a pinch of blackguard to prevent him

from being guilty of the ungentlemanly vice of yawning.

At length the packet from Rome was produced in due form, and the various documents were read, by which it appeared that the Comte was relieved from all the consequences of the past, and was freed from all allegiance, suit, service, &c., towards the gentleman in black, for the future, any bonds, promises, &c. &c. to the contrary notwithstanding.

When the reader was silent, the president arose, and waving his arm with great dignity, exclaimed, "Behold the power of the Church! Great, wonderful, astonishing, marvellous, merciful, infallible is the—hem—In short the business is now at an end—Monsieur le Comte is perfectly freed from the toils.—Ahem. As for you, Monsieur, (turning to the sable vested gentleman) you have no longer any demand on, or controul over, him; therefore

—therefore, allow me to recommend you to retire.”

“By no means,” replied the gentleman in black, “I cannot admit, for a moment, that those documents in any manner affect the validity of the Comte’s bond, voluntarily entered into with me. I consider him to be in the same situation, as regards me, with that of a subject towards his sovereign to whom he has sworn allegiance.”

“Bah !” exclaimed Franchelippe. “And supposing he were ? The Pope, you know, has the power of excommunicating the sovereign, and absolving the subject from allegiance.”

“As to the matter of excommunication,” replied the gentleman of the black bag, “it may be as you say, for aught I know or care ; but, from the best authorities, I learn that he has not the power of absolving any subject from his allegiance.”

“ You are in a state of deplorable ignorance, Monsieur, relative to the power of the Church,” said the president; “ I remember to have read a great deal upon that very subject. Perhaps, brother Rateleux, you will have the goodness——”

Rateleux, who, according to the Cambridge term of the present day, had been “ cramming” himself upon the subject, commenced a long, learned, and tedious dissertation upon papal supremacy; and spoke of the donation of Constantine the great; and quoted divers antient Chronicles, deeds, speeches, and received opinions—related how Clement the Fifth (who, as Pope was, of course, *infallible*) declared in the council of Vienna, that “ all the right of kings depended upon him alone.” How Boniface the Eighth, and Innocent the Fourth had made similar assertions relative to various kingdoms, the former particularly claiming the kingdom of France as “ a fee of the papal majesty.”

When this erudite display of brother Rateleux's reading and industry terminated, there ran a general buz of approbation and triumph round the board, and then the president declared it to be utterly impossible that any thing could be said which should have the smallest weight against such authority. But the gentleman in black appeared in no degree dismayed; and, after a cool and deliberate pinch of snuff, begged leave to make a few observations.

"They would be perfectly useless," said the president, "a mere waste of time, I assure you."

"We cannot sit here all day," observed Franchelippe, somewhat impatiently, and looking at his watch.

"I will not detain you long," said the black bond-holder, "for, although I have no trifling knowledge of many works quoted by the learned gentleman, I will not refer to them. But the fact is, I am a great traveller, and have lately

been much in England and Ireland, particularly the latter; and I find that the best authorities, and the most zealous among those of your own church there, declare that the pope has not——”

Here the president's curiosity got the better of his politeness, and he interrupted the speaker by exclaiming, “well! and how does the good cause go on? It is a sad thing to think of the heretical state of those kingdoms. Abbies, Cathedrals, most excellent benefices I am told, all, all in the possession of heretics! Ah! Our poor brethren! But, tell me, I beg, are things likely soon to be better?”

“As for that, Monsieur,” replied the dark advocate of his own cause, “I dare not speak positively: but I rather think they will. In the mean while, however, what is more to the business in hand, which I always like to stick to, they have agreed that the pope does not possess the power of ——”

“We cannot listen to anything of that kind,” said the president.

“Les bêtes !” exclaimed Nigaudin.

“To think of prescribing limits to the power of his holiness !” cried brother Dodun, turning up his eyes, and concluding with an emphatic “Oh !”

“Let me tell you,” said Rateleux, whose zeal now burst forth in consequence of the approbation which he had just received—“Let me tell you it can be of no consequence what *they* say. What ! Shall it be allowed that a few isolated members of the universal church, shall presume to limit the powers of its supreme and infallible head ? Bah ! What can their opinions, even supposing them to be sincere, weigh against the authorities which I shall, with the permission of our learned president, now proceed to quote ?”

Here the hard-reading member produced a

paper, on which an abundance of closely written extracts, from ancient authors, were drawn up in dark array : but he was prevented from proceeding in his review thereof, by brother Sapeur the Jesuit, with whom, as we stated before, Bagsby had formed an acquaintance.

“ I should recommend an adjournment,” said this son of Loyola briefly : and the influence of his fraternity was so great, that the president seemed disposed to attend to the suggestion ; and even brother Rateleux, at a significant glance from the Jesuit, deposited the important paper calmly amid the heap that lay before him. The other members of the council felt that there was a mystery in the business, and as they could not comprehend it, were wise enough to hold their peace, thereby evincing a degree of prudence worthy of imitation in higher quarters. So, after a short silence, the council was broken up.

“ You have taken a strange method of *assist-
ing* me,” said Bagsby, when he next found himself alone with the Jesuit.

“ I am sorry to have disappointed you,” replied brother Sapeur, “ but it was a very delicate matter ; as you would say, a very ugly piece of business. The point in question was one which, just *now*, it would be exceedingly imprudent to agitate. We must act according to circumstances. The time may come—ahem—no matter—*that* is not *exactly* the business between *us*.”

“ Have you anything to propose ?” asked Bagsby, “ or do you mean to leave me in the lurch, after all your promises ?”

“ I have no such intention,” said Sapeur, “ I propose to have an interview with the gentleman in black upon the Comte’s case, as I feel myself deeply interested therein.”

“ Then the sooner the better !” exclaimed the

individual in question, as he entered the room in which this colloquy was held, in his usual unceremonious way—"The sooner the better, as I have much business in hand," and he seated himself at the table.

The Jesuit looked for a moment at Bagsby, as though he felt uncomfortable at his presence ; but as the lawyer would not take the hint, he proceeded to address the gentleman in black in the Spanish language. His speech was slow, monotonous and mystical, and seemed to make no small impression upon the hearer, who, after looking round for a moment in evident embarrassment, said, "Perhaps—hem—precisely so—I suppose from your dialect you are a Spaniard?"

"I am generally thought to be so when I speak in that tongue," replied Sapeur.

"Precisely so," said the gentleman in black : and then muttered to himself in an under tone,

“A double-tongued Jesuit, and an old, wily, slippery English lawyer! Fearful odds! What chance have *I* between them? I don’t feel myself at all comfortable!” and he applied to his black snuff-boxes and smelling-bottle with unusual vigour, while the Jesuit and Bagsby conversed aside for the space of five minutes, to the great satisfaction of the latter, who was, however, too prudent to allow any evidence thereof to appear on his tutored countenance.

“I can draw up the deed immediately,” said Bagsby, speaking out,—“nothing can be fairer.”

“If the gentleman does not think fit to agree to the proposition *now*, I will not engage to offer it again,” observed the Jesuit in a cavalier tone.

“I have a great objection to delay,” said the gentleman in black.

“Rashness is frequently more prejudicial to one’s interests,” rejoined Sapeur, and old

Bagsby began pulling his under lip, as was his wont when concocting any new device.

“Half the sins remitted! Half the monies paid!” murmured the gentleman in black.

“Precisely so, to use your own words,” replied the Jesuit, “subject to the appropriation of the sum I named for the prosecution of certain schemes, during the progress of which, whatever the end may be, you must be well aware, many of your own interests will be served.”

“I acknowledge the truth of your remark,” said the dark gentleman. “I confess that the stirring up of men’s passions is gratifying to me.”

“I am confident that a person of your good sense must come to a right conclusion,” observed the Jesuit.

“But to postpone my claim to that which is, as it were, within my grasp!” added the other.

“As it were, indeed!” said Sapeur, “You will soon find that I and my worthy friend opposite have not exhausted our resources.”

The gentleman in black sighed and cast a glimpse at Bagsby, and muttered, “Fourteen years!” and then some sudden and not unpleasant idea appeared to cross his mind: and he sat musing and tapping the lid of his black blackguard snuff-box for the space of a minute, when he exclaimed, “Well—then, be it so! The first loss is the best when one gets into such hands.”

“I beg leave to observe that that is a very ungentlemanly observation,” said Bagsby.

“Never mind,” quoth the Jesuit, “We must make allowances. Draw up the deed.”

“Aye, aye,” muttered Bagsby, shuffling up to the table, on which were writing materials in abundance, “Let me see.—Half the monies to be returned.—They are entirely under my

controul, and I shall give a cheque. Half the sins remitted—half the time—that is fourteen years—and at the end of fourteen years more, the question to be resumed as left on this day.”

“Precisely so,” said the gentleman in black.

“We may as well take a walk in the gardens while our friend is engaged,” observed the Jesuit, “and breathe a mouthful of fresh air.”

“With all my heart,” replied the dark gentleman, “It will perhaps do me good, for, to say the truth, I don’t feel quite myself this morning.”

On their return it was evident that the spirits of both were much improved, whether from the effects of the air, or anything they had seen in the gardens of the Tuilleries, or that they had been complimenting and mystifying one another, must remain a matter of uncertainty.

The lawyer, in the interim, had not been idle,

for the deed was ready for signature, and he presented it to the gentleman in black, and requested him to look over it.

“Bah !” exclaimed the man of sables, “what a rig-marole ! Four long pages ! I never could comprehend these endless, senseless phrases—provided—nevertheless—hem—ha ! I see the heads are right. “Fourteen years”—ah—“Half the amount of”—“renewed in fourteen years”—hem—well—here goes then, for once, to remit my just and lawful claims. Give me a pen.”

The document was regularly signed, and witnessed by Sapeur the Jesuit, and Bagsby, and the cheque handed over to the gentleman in black, who put it carefully up in his black morocco leather pocket-book, and then throwing himself back in a chair, gave vent to one of his startling fits of immoderate laughter.

Hereupon the Jesuit looked somewhat blank,

and uttered an expressive "Humph!" while Bagsby's ancient and meagre countenance underwent not the shadow of a change.

"Do you know," asked the gentleman of the dark suit, addressing the latter, as soon as he had recovered from his hilarious paroxysm, "what was my principal reason for signing the paper which you have in your pocket?"

"Not I," replied the lawyer, "I neither know nor care. All I know is that my purpose is answered, and that is sufficient for me."

"Then I'll tell you," said the gentleman in black, "I have been calculating that before the expiration of fourteen years, *you* will have ceased to be in a condition to oppose me."

"Humph!" grunted Bagsby, "Literæ scriptæ manent—you may, perhaps, have no great cause for congratulating yourself when the time comes."

"What do you mean?" inquired the dark gentleman briskly.

“ Nothing more,” replied the lawyer calmly, “ than that I have taken proper care of my client’s interest. All demands on either side, either for money or sin, cease for fourteen years, and, at the end of that period, as I have reserved to the Comte an option of cancelling whichever half of the eight and twenty years he pleases, I suppose he will find no great difficulty in sinning for a second on the first year of your renewed claim, and two seconds during the second, and so on; and moreover, in case he should have become particularly religious in his latter days, he will have the advantage of the clause introduced by yourself into the original bond, by which “ all sins committed before, and all sins which he may commit in future, over and above the stipulated agreement, are to be taken into account.” So, altogether, if he makes proper use of the money yet remaining in his hands, what with interest and compound interest, I think you might almost

as well be in Chancery. He, he ! Why don't you laugh ?" and the old fellow cackled most triumphantly, till a fit of coughing put an end to his merriment.

The gentleman in black, in the meanwhile sat sadly crest-fallen and disconcerted, while the Jesuit appeared to be absorbed in some deep and abstruse calculations, his dark brow and pale cheek supported on his left hand, as he murmured at intervals, "Fourteen years—and fourteen—twenty-eight—the mission—the Bourbons — Ferd — inquisit — emancipation — a glimpse of former—hem—magna est veritas et—hem—twice fourteen—a general—why not ?"

"Fool that I was !" exclaimed the gentleman in black, rising and stamping violently on the floor, "to think of signing any paper without bringing my own lawyer."

"It was very imprudent, certainly," replied Bagsby, "but what is done cannot be undone,

and you should not bear malice. I must now go and report progress to my client," and thus saying, he arose and took his hat.

"I shall not lose sight of you," exclaimed he of the black habiliments, somewhat angrily; but in a moment curbing his passion, he made an effort at apparent magnanimity, and assuming his usual courteousness, continued, "I will do myself the pleasure of calling upon you at Lyons Inn ere long. I admire your talents, and shall cultivate a more intimate acquaintance; for you have convinced me that, notwithstanding a considerable portion of self-conceit to which I plead guilty, I have yet much to learn. People say that I have a very extensive circle of friends among gentlemen of your profession, but I assure you that the report is not to be relied on. Indeed, considering the facilities of introduction which I possess, and the inducements I frequently

have in my power to hold out, I am often surprised that I have not more on my list."

"I wish you a good morning," said Bagsby, taking his leave.

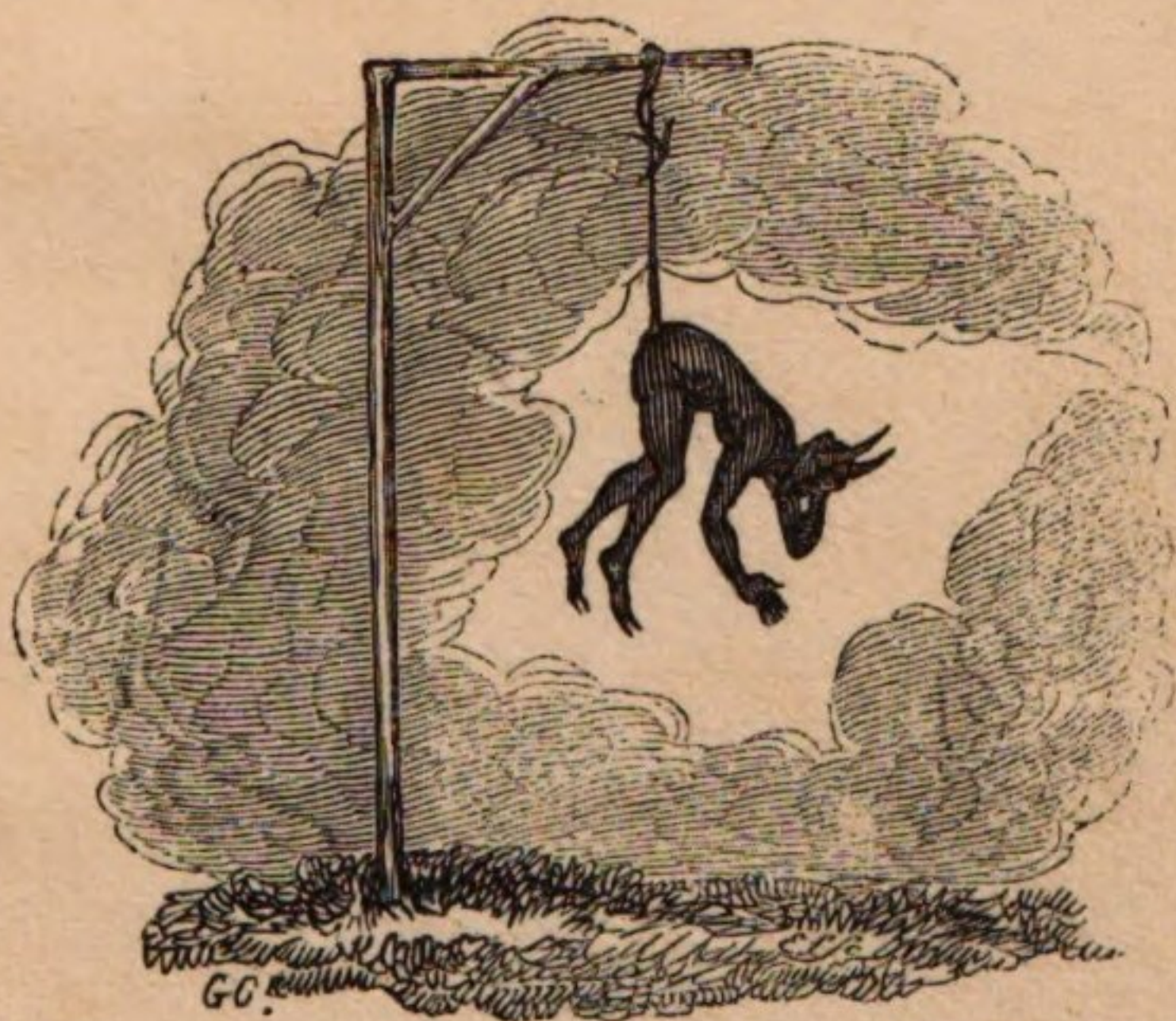
"Au revoir," replied the gentleman in black, bowing politely.—And so they parted.

A grand entertainment was given at the Comte D'Ormalle's hotel, whereat Bagsby "sported" a new wig, and was introduced as the Comte's most particular friend to many noble personages, and "*gens comme il faut*;" but a whisper of the story of "a gentleman in black" had gone abroad, and he found himself alone in a crowd, though the "*admired of all admirers*." The ladies, in particular, reversing the usual custom of "*place aux dames*," made way for him wherever he moved. His was a painful pre-eminence, and therefore he lost no time in returning to the quietude of Lyons Inn, where he and old Jerry were alive some years ago, and going on in the old six-and-eightpenny style.

Considering his nation and his habits, it will not appear surprising that the Comte D'Ormalle did not concern himself about what might happen in about eight and twenty years. The ecclesiastical council on his case was broken up; and the only individual of that body who appears to have taken any further interest in the matter is brother Rateleux, who was long employed in a deep investigation and learned dissertation upon the probability and possibility of the gentleman in black urging his claims, should the Comte have arrived in purgatory before the expiration of the period during which he had agreed to allow them to remain dormant. We are happy to say that the decision to which he came was, that, in such a case, which according to the usual tenor of human existence, may probably occur, the gentleman in black will be nonsuited. But if the learned brother has made a false conclusion, or the Comte should survive the stipulated period, his ultimate

fate must depend entirely upon the question of the pope's supremacy, which may, perhaps, then be argued at full length. But, it is an enquiry of too deep importance, and involved too much in the labyrinths of historical investigation, for us to venture an opinion thereupon.

In the meanwhile they are going on in Paris as if they cared nothing about the matter.



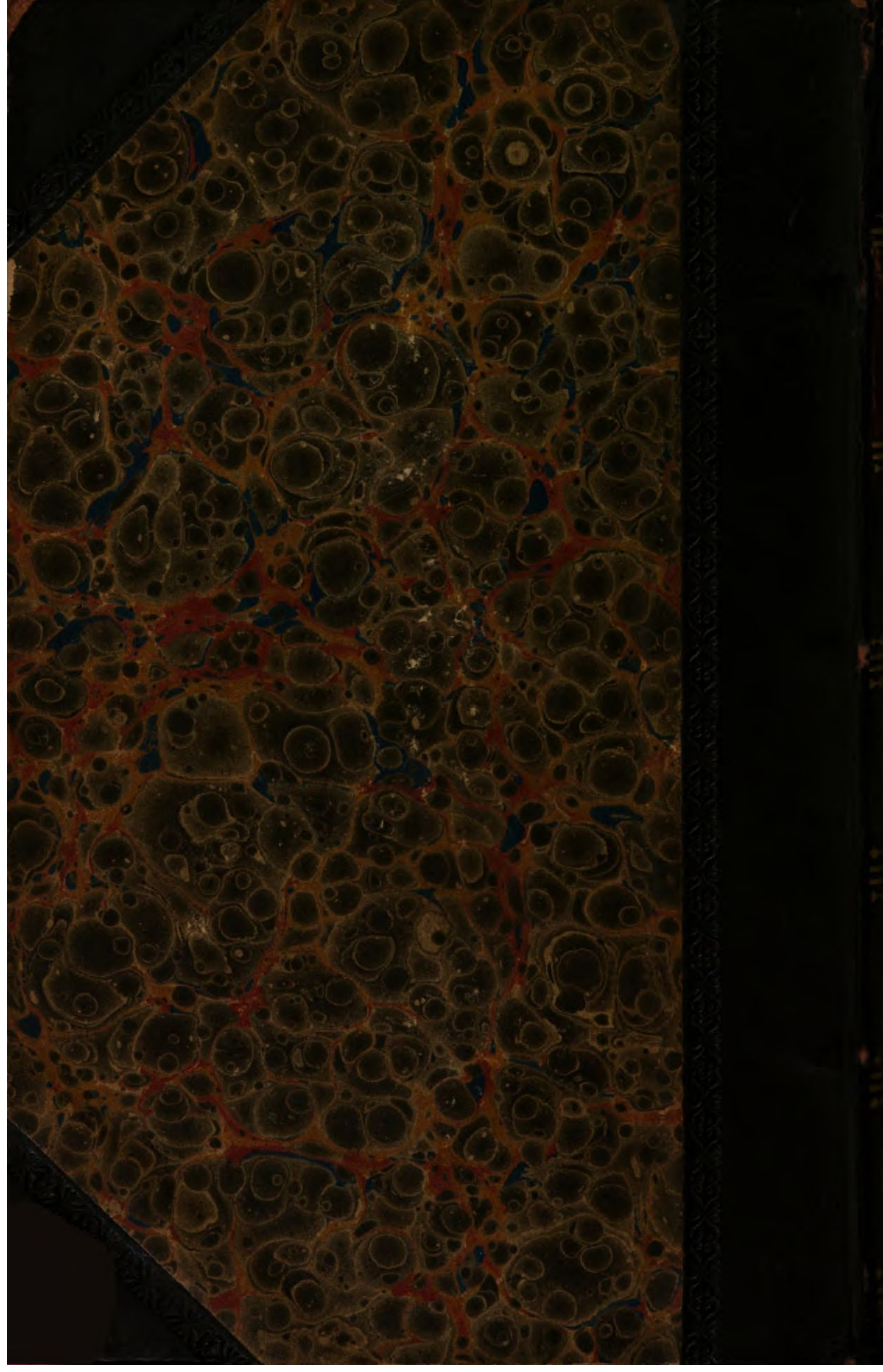
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Dalton, James

The gentleman in black

London 1831

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